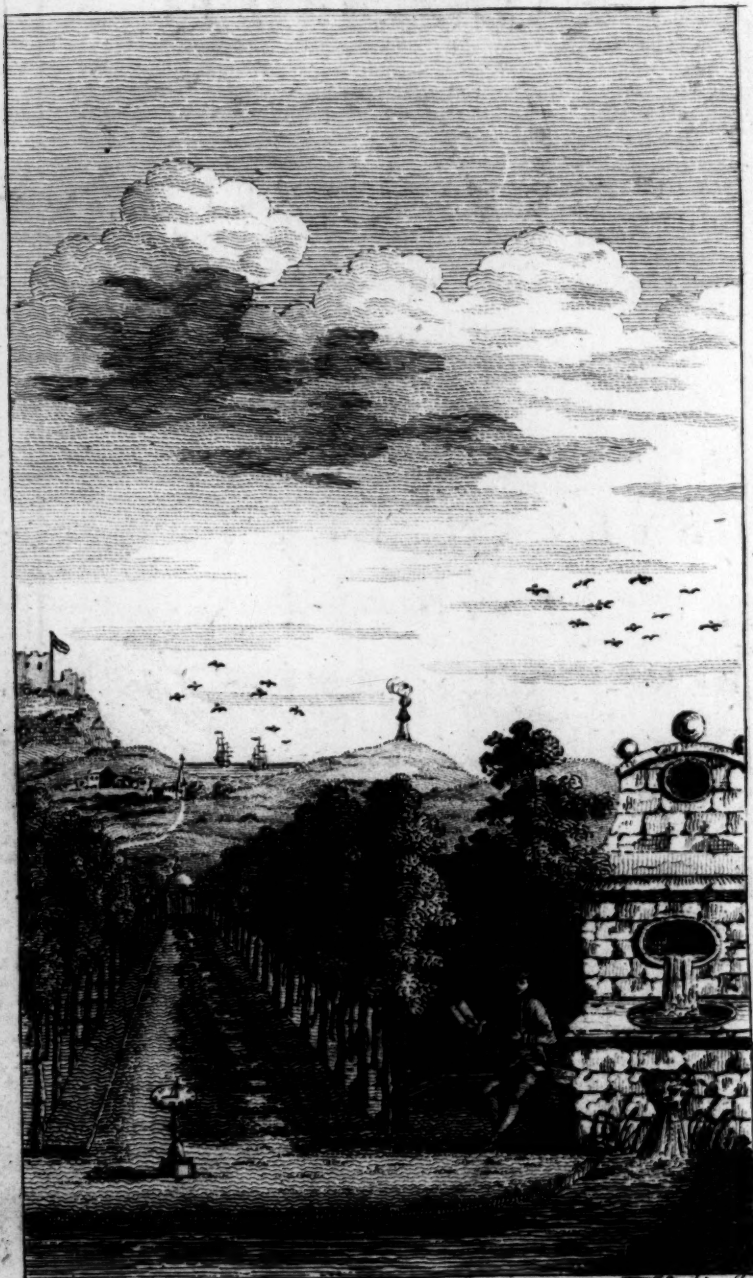


*G. Wright delin*  
*Retire, and read thy Bible to be gay.*  
*T. Kitchen sculp*  
*Young*



*G. Wright delin*  
*Retire, and read thy Bible to be gay.*  
*T. Kitchen sculp*  
*Young*

THE 1489.9.17.  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

AN ALLEGORICAL POEM:

IN FOUR BOOKS.

To which are added,

SYLVAN LETTERS;

OR, THE  
BENEFITS OF RETIREMENT.

---

BY A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

---

Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes.

*Hor. lib. ii.*

. . . . . I solitary court  
Th' inspiring breeze, and meditate the book  
Of Nature ever open; aiming thence,  
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song.

*Thomson's Autumn.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, at No. 57, in  
Pater-noster Row, MDCCLXXII.

RURAL CHRISTIAN

OR THE

MINISTERS OF RELIGION

IN THE

ALLIANCE OF

IN FOUR BOOKS

FOR THE

OF THE

AND VARIOUS LETTERS

REMARKS OF RETIREMENT



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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
WILLIAM  
EARL OF DARTMOUTH,  
UNIVERSALLY ESTEEMED  
FOR HIS STEADY ADHERENCE TO,  
AS WELL AS CONSTANT PATRONAGE  
AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF  
THE CAUSE AND INTEREST  
OF VIRTUE AND RELIGION,  
THE FOLLOWING POEM AND LETTERS  
ARE WITH ALL DUE SUBMISSION  
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.

THE  
P R E F A C E.

**D**AVID, the sweet singer of Israel, introduces the country in several of his Psalms, not only as the subject but the place of his meditations, as in the 23d psalm and 2d verse; "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters." Rural scenes are the chosen retreats of the poet, the silent abodes of health, and quiet dwellings of meditation, where variety pleases the eye, retirement calms the soul, and solitude invites reflection \*. Whilst the noisy town is swallowed up in pursuits after riches, here true felicity and undisturbed tranquillity are enjoyed, far from the hurry of business, the toils of industry, and anxieties of gain.

Not that diligence is incompatible with religion, or assiduity an hindrance to devotion: no, the Almighty has placed us in different

\* To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms, incomparably more engaging than the entertainments presented in the theatre, or the honours conferred in the drawing-room.

*Hervey's Meditations, Vol. II.*



## P R E F A C E.

different stations, the filling up of which, to the best of our abilities, is part of that duty we owe to God, ourselves, and the community.

THAT a man may be *in* the world and not *of* it, is an undoubted truth; and that the greater and more numerous the allurements to sin are, the greater is the conquest, and more glorious the victory, cannot be denied. To be unmoved in the midst of temptations, untainted in circles of pleasure, and unrepachable in an age of licentiousness, are the marks of true virtue and sobriety; whilst a strict adherence to the precepts of morality, and observance of the law of God, are indubitable proofs of genuine godliness, and indicate the real Christian.

YET, it will be allowed by all, that the calmness and serenity of the verdant fields, the beauty and harmony of the Creator's works, are best seen, and better contemplated, in the sylvan retirements of rural solitude, and more suited to the temper of a reflecting mind. If Providence then, has given opportunities to enjoy them, without endangering the future welfare of a family, or the emolument of a rising offspring, wherein it can be stiled criminal  
and

and faulty, must be referred to the nice researchers into the secrets of the human mind.

THAT Isaac went into the fields to meditate, the Scriptures inform us\*; and that others may do the same, without injuring themselves in particular or society in general, must be admitted.

THE following poem, however it may have failed in the execution, is laudable in its design, being intended as a companion to the Christian in his walks in the country, to lead his thoughts from the different objects presented to his view, to the omnipotent Creator of all things, and enable him to improve every scene he passes by to his own everlasting benefit and advantage. On this account, the Author humbly hopes (however he may be laughed at and despised by the unthinking and irreligious many†) to gain the approbation of the wise, religious, and discerning few; to whom he would ever desire to approve himself the Real, as well as

Finchley, July 2, 1772.

RURAL CHRISTIAN.

---

\* Genesis xxiv. 63.

† He that strives universal affection to gain,  
Shows a world of good-nature, but labours in vain.

---

## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HOUGH the following Work is principally calculated for the country, it is not in the least improper to be read by persons residing in the metropolis; who, by their several wealth-procuring avocations, may be necessarily detained in town, on the prudent and laudable designs of maintaining their respective families, or providing for their future accommodation and subsistence: however, they may not have an opportunity of passing the same objects, or viewing the scenes on which the reflections in the ensuing poem are made; yet, let them properly weigh, and carefully observe, the important admonitions it contains, and endeavour in like manner to spiritualize those different employments they are engaged in, as much as possible, as well as those various accidents and occurrences they must daily hear, read, or meet with, in so populous a city; and the Author doubts not, but they will find more *real* comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction, in their own minds, from such a practice, than the world can give or take away; or  
the

the worldling can possibly enjoy, when his corn, his wine, and his oil increase.

SOME persons, who are well-wishers to the interest of religion, have occasioned it to be ridiculed, and made themselves laught at, by indiscreetly introducing spiritual similies and reflections, in a mixt company, met together, it may be, for secular or convivial purposes: this, the Author would by no means be thought to recommend, as he esteems it making too light with sacred things, and the means, in all probability, of throwing pearls before swine, according to the language of Scripture; but advises such, who are of so spiritual a turn of mind, to have due regard to the time, place, and company. To be in a praying or spiritualizing frame at all times, is one happy mark of a truly serious mind; but let not the Christian think it any part of his duty, from hence to act the enthusiast; for though the gospel teaches us *to be all things to all men*, yet, at the same time it says, “*Do all things with decency and in order.*” 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

---

☞ We are not to omit any opportunity of doing good, either by words or actions, in every company; but let us remember we are to think *twice*, before we speak *once*.

THE

THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;  
OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.  
BOOK THE FIRST.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good  
Almighty, thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: thyself how wondrous then!

*Par. Loft.*

## THE ARGUMENT.

**T**HE subject proposed; an address to the Almighty for his gracious assistance in the work; a summer's morning described; a walk in the fields; all the creation called on to praise the Lord. The transient dew resembles fading beauty; the azure heavens an emblem of a spotless mind; directions for youth at their first entrance into life; the sun shining an emblem of the effects faith produces in believers. Bees, (Nature's chemists) observations on them: the sun an emblem of Jesus Christ; the effects he produces in the moral world; a storm of thunder and lightning described; running under trees for shelter compared to a sinner's trusting in his own works, or the law, for salvation. A call upon atheists to own the Lord; the fields represent poor sinners under sense of sin; the shortness of life; the storm illustrated; the author's prayer for his readers.



---

THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;  
OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.  
BOOK THE FIRST.

WHILST genial Summer clothes the  
distant fields

With ev'ry beauty that the country yields,  
Near the soft murmurs of some purling stream  
Let rural pleasures be my gentle theme.\*

ETERNAL GOD, whose all-prolific pow'r 5  
Is plainly seen in every op'ning flow'r;

B 2

Whose

---

\* To me be Nature's volume broad display'd;  
And to peruse its all-instructive page,  
Or haply catching inspiration thence  
Some easy passage, raptur'd to translate,  
My sole delight; as thro' the falling glooms,  
Pensive I stray, or with the rising dawn,  
On Fancy's eagle wing excursive soar.

*Thomson's Summer.*

Whose wisdom shines in Nature's ample page,  
 My mind enlighten, and my thoughts engage,  
 Thou great Creator, and the Guide of men,  
 Vouchsafe in mercy to direct my pen, 10  
 Open my mouth, and aid me to declare  
 How great thy works, how manifold they are,  
 Thy ways how good. Assist me, Grace divine,  
 Then shall thy praise resound from line to line.

THE smiling morn, with streaks of rosy light,  
 Has chas'd away the gloomy shades of night; 16  
 The blushing east a crimson radiance yields,  
 And dewy spangles deck the verdant fields.\*  
 The tuneful birds salute the op'ning day,  
 And stretch their warbling throats on ev'ry spray.  
 The rising sun begins to warm the air, † 21  
 And shepherds hasten to their fleecy care: ‡  
 The

---

\* Now Morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime  
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with oriental pearl.

*Par. Lost, b. 5th.*

† All Nature laughs, the Groves are fresh and fair,  
 The Sun's mild lustre warms the vital air.

*Pope's Pastorals.*

‡ . . . . The soon-clad shepherd leaves  
 His mossy cottage, where with peace he dwells.

*Thomson's Spring.*

The fog disperses at th' approach of morn,  
 And gentle breezes fan the waving corn;  
 The busy bee to ev'ry blossom flies, 25  
 Whilst yellow treasure loads its little thighs;  
 Industr'ous ants tread nimbly o'er the ground,  
 The verdant plains with lowing herds resound,  
 And bount'ous heav'n makes all things smile }  
 around.

Now let me walk where roving Fancy leads,  
 In bleating pastures or sequester'd meads,\* 31  
 On rising hills or pass the silent vale,  
 For meditation suits the peaceful dale.  
 Here, with an inward pleasure, may I trace  
 The wond'rous footsteps of almighty Grace, 35  
 Who, at the first, primeval silence broke,  
 And worlds unnumber'd into being spoke.  
 Whose wisdom form'd the great amazing plan,  
 And, by his pow'rful word, created Man. †

B 3

'Tis

---

\* . . . . . Now from the town,  
 Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damps,  
 Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,  
 Where freshness breathes.

*Thomson's Spring.*

† Genesis i. 26.

'Tis he alone, who rules the chequer'd year, 40  
 Calls forth the seasons, and they all appear ;  
 These, as they change, are but the vari'd God,\*  
 They come and go at his almighty Nod.  
 Let all creation praise its Maker's name ;  
 Ye rural scenes his handy works proclaim. † 45

BLESS thou the Lord, my soul, his praises sing,  
 And grateful off'rings to his temple bring ;  
 Who hast preserv'd thee to the present day,  
 And as a watchful shepherd guides thy way ;  
 At night to shield thee from the foe's alarms, 50  
 Lays underneath thee everlasting arms.  
 'Tis he alone my rising thoughts employs  
 On heav'nly subjects and celestial joys :  
 In sultry noon, reclin'd in yonder grove,  
 The banner he spreads over me is love : 55  
 In every field his goodness I survey,  
 And trace his footsteps in the new-born day.

As

---

\* These as they change, almighty Father, these  
 Are but the varied God.

*Thomson's Hymn, l. 1.*

† Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,  
 In mingled clouds to *Him*, whose sun exalts,  
 Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.

*Ditto, l. 56.*

As day advances, see the prospect rise,  
 The lofty mountains seem to touch the skies ;  
 The distant hills a blueish aspect wear,      60  
 And warbling birds salute the fragrant air.\*  
 The glitt'ring dews, which deck the verdant lawn  
 With Nature's jewels, scarce survive the dawn.†  
 O'ercome with heat, they quickly disappear,  
 And soon are gone, like all enjoyments here. 65  
 Thus youthful charms by sickness are decay'd ;  
 Thus death ere long will every beauty fade.  
 Then haste, ye fair ones, daily strive to find  
 Those nobler beauties of a virtuous mind ; 69  
 Wisdom and prudence join'd with inward grace,  
 These far transcend the most alluring face ; ‡  
 As sparkling diamonds, which your hands adorn,  
 Outvie the dewy spangles of a summer's morn. §

B 4

The

- 
- \* Here how the birds, on ev'ry blooming spray,  
 With joyous musick wake the dawning day.

*Pope's Pastorals.*

† Hosea, vi. 4.

‡ Proverbs, xxxi. 30.

- § Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,  
 Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn.

*Pope's Homer.*

The spacious heav'ns in azure robes are drest,  
 Instructive emblem of the virtuous breast: 75  
 Unmov'd by troubles, clear from wilful sin,  
 Without good nature, all divine within ; \*  
 From anxious cares and vicious passions free,  
 Such let your mind, and such your temper be.

O MAY each *British* youth, with virtue fir'd,  
 With love of wisdom and of truth inspir'd, 81  
 Shine like the morn in ev'ry inward grace,  
 And promise fair to run the christian race.  
 Let true Religion first your care engage, †  
 Dare to be virtuous in a vicious age. 85  
 Mind not the impious scoff nor idle sneer ;  
 But (as enabled) ‡ boldly persevere  
 In Wisdom's ways, for pleasures dwell therein, §  
 Unknown to sinners, and estrang'd to sin :

Hate

- 
- \* Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,  
 Who keeps his temper'd mind serene and pure,  
 And every passion aptly harmoniz'd.

*Thomson's Summer.*

† Matthew vi. 33.

‡ Look up to Heaven for assistance, for of ourselves  
 we cannot think a good thought, &c.

*James, i. 5.*

§ Proverbs iii. 17.

Hate youthful follies with a just disdain, 90  
 Shun carnal pleasures, lest they prove your bane ;\*  
 And strive to act in ev'ry station well,  
 For after death your souls must ever dwell, }  
 With saints in *heaven*, or with fiends in *hell*. †

As now the sun his chearing beams displays, 95  
 Enlivening Nature with her quickening rays ;  
 So in awaken'd souls does Faith appear,  
 Their hopes to animate, their doubts to clear, †  
 Their griefs to soften, and their fears remove,  
 Their graces heighten, and their zeal improve ;  
 To chear their souls, and raise their thoughts on  
 high, 101

To teach them how to live, and how to die ;  
 To warm their hearts with true seraphic love,  
 And give enlivening foretastes of the joys above. §  
 As heat encreases with the rolling hours, 105  
 Draws up the vapours, and expands the flow'rs ;  
 So

---

\* Romans viii. 6. † John v. 29.

‡ Romans v. 1, 2.

§ Hebrews xi. 1. to the 14th verse.

So with thy childhood may thy follies cease,  
 So may thy wisdom with thy years encrease;  
 So may religion early warm thy soul, —  
 Encourage, actuate, and chear the whole. 110  
 May useful knowledge thus thy mind extend,  
 Thy manners polish, and thy actions mend.  
 Improve thy judgment, and thy thoughts refine,  
 Thy wand'ring steps to Wisdom's ways incline :  
 Make ev'ry hour a critic on the past, 115  
 And live each day as tho' it was your last,\*

As thro' the vari'gated fields I stray,  
 A verdant border lines the dev'ous way;  
 Where flow'rs on either side spontaneous grow,  
 And the embroidery of Nature show. 120  
 Here various colours catch the roving eye,  
 But late unfolded by the genial sky.  
 Here bees (great Nature's chemists) draw their  
     sweets  
 From every blossom in these calm retreats.

THUS,

---

\* But you with pleasure own your errors past,  
 And make each day a critic on the last.

THUS, O my soul, may'st thou improvement

gain 125

From every object on the rural plain :

Thus from the sacred pages daily find

Food for the comfort of thy troubled mind.

And in believing thus extract a joy,

Which this world cannot give, nor hell itself

destroy.\* 130

THE chearful sun, the reservoir of light,

Whose presence makes the day, whose absence night,

Faintly resembles in its noon-day blaze,

The Sun of Righteousness ; † whose healing rays

Enlivening guilty souls, like mists disperse 135

The baleful vapours of the fatal curse.

Our state of ign'rance (as the gloomy shades

At day-break vanish) quickly he pervades ;

Our doubts (like exhalations) die away,

Before this Regent of eternal day. ‡ 140

Our

---

\* Romans xv. 13. 1 Peter i. 8.

† Great source of day ! best image here below  
Of thy Creator.

*Thomson's Hymn.*

‡ 2 Cor. v. 17.

Our glimm'ring reason, sublunary spark,  
 Without his influence, leaves us in the dark,  
 And all its followers into ruin leads,  
 (Like unctuous vapours in the watry meads) †  
 But when with strength assisted from above, 145  
 Points to those regions of eternal love, ‡  
 Where true believers, (who, like stars on earth,  
 The blest partakers of the second birth)  
 Transform'd to suns, shall unmolested shine,  
 Thro' all eternity, with rays divine, || 150

But lo! a storm seems brooding in the air,  
 To yonder cot for shelter I'll repair ;

The

---

† See the note in page 72, of Hervey's Contemplations on the Night.

† . . . So reason's glimmering ray  
 Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,  
 But guide us upwards to a better day.

}

*Dryden.*

|| If there is a future state of rewards and punishments (which appears absolutely necessary from the unequal distribution of them here below,) the christian must certainly be accounted the happiest man, as having the promise of this life and that which is to come. 1 Timothy iv. 8. Matthew xiii. 43. Daniel xii. 3.

The calm abode of Innocence and Health,  
 To Pain a stranger, and unknown to Wealth.  
 The gathering clouds in darkness hide the sky,  
 Affrighted hinds to trees for shelter fly, 156  
 Whose spreading branches draw the lightning  
                   down,  
 Which swift descending kills the heedless clown.  
 Like the good works the sinner pleads in vain,  
 Or his own righteousness his fatal bane; 160  
 Which, while he blindly trusts in, lets him fall  
 Beyond the reach of even Mercy's call.\*  
 So those who seek forgiveness from the law,  
 Which calls for death for ev'ry single flaw; †  
 (Despising Jesus, who, in wond'rous grace, 165  
 Came down and died to save a rebel race, ‡  
 When plac'd before Jehovah's awful throne,  
 Struck with remorse, repeating groan for groan,  
 Whilst judg'd by him, whom they on earth  
                   contemn'd) 169  
 Shall by this *very* law betry'd, be cast, condemn'd. ||

LOUD

---

\* Job viii. 13, 14. Ecclesiastes xi. 3.  
 † Galatians iii. 10, 11.  
 ‡ Matthew xviii. 11. Luke xix. 10.  
 || Romans iii. 20. Galatians ii. 16. John xii. 48.

Loud claps of thunder introduce the storm,  
 And lightnings flash in every dreadful form.  
 O may they strike conviction in the soul,  
 And God be honour'd when the thunders roll!  
 Ye harden'd sinners, hear his voice and live, 175  
 'Tis only *He* can speak the word forgive. † —  
 Ye happy souls, who on his name depend,  
 Fear not the storm, for *Jesus* is your friend :  
 Resting alone on his almighty Grace, |  
 He'll prove your rock, your shield, your hiding  
 place ; ‡ 180  
 And when grim death shall close your weary eyes,  
 Conduct you safely into happier skies,  
 Where troubles cease, which haunt this earthly ball,  
 There God in Christ will be your all in all. ||

IN

† 1 Corinthians iii. 11.

† Ifaiah xxxii. 2. Pfalm lxxxiv. 1-1.

The believer is not fav'd by any works of his own tho' ever so good, nor *for* but *in* believing on Jesus Christ, as the way and means appointed by the Father; therefore Paul says, By grace ye are fav'd *thro'* faith, yet not of *yourselves*, it is the gift of God. Ephesians ii. 8.

|| Colossians iii. 4, 11.    1 Corinthians xv. 28.

IN every clap you hear th' Almighty's word, †  
 In every flash you see his blazing sword. † 186  
 Where's now the atheist, who would fain advance  
 That hellish doctrine, all things came by chance;  
 Who vainly strives his reason to persuade,  
 That ev'ry system by itself was made. 190  
 Presumptuous man! what, disbelieve a God?  
 Now trembling come, behold his flaming rod:  
 Convinc'd he reigns, implore with inward grief,  
 " Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief!" §  
 Whilst lightnings flash, or thunders roll around,  
 And echoing clouds retain the awful sound, 196  
 O come, thou self-deceiver, humbly fall  
 Before his throne; attend the gracious call,  
 And own the great I AM, who made both }  
 thee and all. ||

AH!

---

† See Hervey's Descant on the Creation, Page 254.

‡ The thunder is his voice; and the red flash  
 His speedy sword of justice.

*Thomson's Spring.*

The author gratefully acknowledges having received  
 much assistance in composing the following work,  
 from Mr. Thomson's excellent poem on the Seasons.

§ Mark ix. 23, 24.

|| John i. 3. Colossians i. 16.

Ah! there's another flash, the searching light  
 Pervades the cottage, and affects the sight; 201  
 Chills every nerve, and strikes thro' every vein  
 A trembling dread; whilst o'er the gloomy plain  
 The storm descending spreads thick horrors round,  
 And peals of rattling thunder shake the hollow  
 ground. † 205

Thus the poor soul, beneath a sense of sin,  
 When doubts prevail, finds all is dark within;  
 While Satan drives her into sad despair,  
 She seeks for comfort, but no comfort's there:  
 Conviction's flashes only serve to show, 210  
 Amidst the darkness scenes of greater woe;  
 Her guilt how heinous, and how strong her foe! }

OBSERVE the change! how dull the country  
 seems,  
 When clouds prevent the sun's enlivening beams.  
 Where'er

† This orb's wide frame with the convulsion shakes,  
 Oft opens in the storm and often cracks;  
 Horror, amazement, and despair appear,  
 In all the hideous forms which mortals fear;  
 Exploded thunder tears the embowell'd sky,  
 And sulph'rous flames a dismal day supply.

*Blackmore;*

Where'er I look all Nature seems forlorn, 215  
 The flocks and herds, the fields and meadows  
 mourn.

So mourns the trembling Sinner taught by  
 Grace,

When fears arise and Jesus hides his face ;  
 He hears aghast, the Soul that sins shall die,  
 Asham'd and hopeless knows not where to fly ; 220

↳ Till faith steps in, removes the dismal gloom,  
 And says, Fear not, in *Jesu's Love* there's room ; \*

“ He ever lives to plead the sinner's cause, †

“ Who seeks his favour and obeys his laws,

• “ Who takes him only for his trust and guide, 225

“ For such he suffer'd, and for such he died ;”

By faith beholding Christ his doubtings cease,  
 Hope cheers his troubled Soul, and all within is  
 peace. ‡

BUT see ! the neighbouring vallies smoke  
 with rain,  
 The raging tempest sweeps along the plain, 230  
 Surrounds the cottage of the village-swain ;

C

Whilst

\* Luke xiv. 22. † Hebrews vii. 25.

‡ Hebrews vi. 18, 19.

Whilst rural sports no longer fill the place,  
But ghastly fear appears in every face.

So when afflictions seize the guilty Soul,  
And fell distempers rage without controul ; 235  
If not delirious, O! what words can paint  
His inward horror ; all expression's faint ;  
Satan upbraids him, there's no hope for you,  
Conscience presents his numerous crimes to view ;\*  
What mercies flighted and what time misus'd ; 240  
He cannot pray, his thoughts are all confus'd.  
In vain physicians try their healing arts,  
Thro' ev'ry vein the raging fever darts ;  
His pains increase, his dreadful end is near,  
Yet nought to *hope* for, but has all to *fear*.† 245

No

---

\* Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*.

*Young.*

Religion will afford her followers living comforts  
in dying moments, but vice can yield nothing to her  
votaries at such a time, but what will aggravate their  
despair ; therefore prays the prophet, " Let me die the  
death of the Righteous, and let my latter end be like  
his." Numbers xxiii. 10.

† Psalm lxxiii. 19. Psalm xxxiv. 21.

No God to go to, † Oh, how sad the thought!  
 No plea for mercy when to judgment brought;  
 Without a promise which might comfort yield,  
 When Death has got the last commission seal'd. ||  
 Without a Saviour able to engage, 250  
 To hide him from an injur'd Sov'reign's rage;  
 Without a friend to make his life his care,  
 To mourn his sorrows or his pains to share;  
 None all around him who his case bemoan,  
 Or make (by sympathy) his griefs their own. 255

C 2

Thus

---

† Proverbs xv. 29.

|| Among the numerous advantages the christian has over the men of the world, are the following: When laid on a sick-bed and in the views of death and a future state, he has a God to pray to, whose ears are ever open to his people's cries; a promise of mercy to trust in for his encouragement, and a Redeemer to procure him pardon and salvation at the judgment day, which reviving considerations support and animate him, when the world, and all things in it cannot yield him the least consolation, and make him say with the apostle Paul, when taking leave of all *terrestrial* enjoyments, "to die is gain;" to these pleasing reflections the sinner is an entire stranger, and therefore of such a one it is declared in Scripture, there is no hope in his death. Proverbs v. 23.

Thus wretched Sinners, who their God deny,  
 And for salvation on themselves rely,  
 Live unbelov'd, and unlamented die. }

THE flocks, and herds that fed on yonder  
 ground,

Are swept away and in the torrent drown'd. 260

The healthy husbandman to sloth unknown,

Struggles with Death in meadows late his own.

See how precarious is the life of man,

Short and uncertain is our earthly span ;

A few more years, or weeks, or moments past, 265

And you (tho' now in health) may breathe your

last: \*

For know, O Man, when 'tis thy Maker's will,

"A fly, a grape-stone, or a hair may kill." †

When nature's foe receives the dire command,

None can elude or stay the tyrant's hand. † 270

Thou

\* Job vii. 1, 6. Luke xii. 20. † Prior's Variety  
 of Deaths. † Psalm lxxxix. 48.

The thought of the uncertainty of life and certainty  
 of death, should persuade young and old, rich and poor,  
 to endeavour to be always in habitual as well as actual  
 readiness for their great change. Mark xiii. 35, 36, 37.

Thou must not, youth, on numerous years depend,  
 For unknown accidents thy steps attend ;  
 Disorders numberless await thee here,  
 Thy greatest *pleasures* may thy *bane* appear,  
 Some sudden illness soon may stop thy breath, 275  
 And prove an inlet to *eternal* Death. \*

The *old* must go, yet prize the *present* day,  
 For 'tis as *certain* that the younger may. †  
 Health, like the Sun, is hastening to its goal,  
 Storms of distress may overtake thy soul, ‡ 280  
 And thy *vain* hopes (as on the billows tost,  
 A scatter'd fleet) may be forever lost. ||

THE pleasant prospects now are seen no more,  
 But all around a sea without a shore ;

C 3

The

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\* Romans vii. 5. Ecclesiastes ix. 12. Chap. viii. 6, 13.

† Ecclesiastes xi. 9, 10. Chap. xii. 1.

‡ Job viii. 13, 14. Proverbs x. 28. Chap. xi. 7.

|| The rose is fragrant, but it fades in time,

The violet sweet, but quickly past its prime ;

White lillies hang their heads and soon decay,

And whiter snow, in minutes melts away ;

Such and so withering is our blooming youth.

Dryden.

The fields and hedges under water lie, 285  
 And travellers belated sink and die,  
 Or hurried forward down the swelling wave,  
 In vain resisting meet a watry grave.  
 Learn hence how great the danger to delay  
 Unfeign'd repentance till a *future* day, \* 290  
 Which ne'er may come to your *eternal* cost;  
 For he that dies in sin *forever's* lost. †  
 Your day of life will shortly have an end, ‡  
 Dark clouds of sickness may a storm portend:  
 The present hours will ne'er return again, 295  
 Your sun may set or be eclips'd in pain;  
 The passing day you now with folly slight,  
 May quickly end in everlasting night. ||

The

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\* Luke xiii. 3. John iii. 36.

† Ecclesiastes xi. 3. ‡ Romans xiii. 12.

|| No one ever repented giving himself up to God too soon, but many that they put it off till it was too late; one sinner was pardon'd at the last hour that none might despair, and only one that none might pre-sume. Luke xxiii. 43.

The evening soon will come, your race be o'er,  
 The places now you know, you'll know no  
 more. 300

BUT see ! the rivers o'er the vallies spread,  
 And fishes swim where lately oxen fed.  
 Think while this tempest overflows the land,  
 A far more dreadful storm is near at hand ;  
 For which if not prepar'd, you'll ever dwell 305  
 In endless flames with Souls accurs'd in Hell.  
 As waters cover now the fertile ground,  
 May true contrition thus thine heart surround, }  
 And in its current all thy Sins be drown'd. }  
 May thunders of conviction shake thy Soul, 310  
 And thro' thy breast awakening terrors roll.  
 Whilst conscience flashes o'er thy guilty mind,  
 And floods of tears an easy passage find ;  
 May seas \* of comfort overwhelm thy pains,  
 And virtue dwell where vice at present reigns. 315

C 4

This

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\* The reader will excuse the impropriety of the  
 expression, in order to carry on the allegory.

This deluge, like th' o'erflowing Nile, †  
 Shall make thee fruitful prove ;  
 Thy Soul to Jesus reconcile,  
 And fill thee with his Love.

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† That part of Ægypt where the Nile is (being  
 seldom, if ever, watered by showers) Providence so  
 orders it that the Nile overflows its banks once a year,  
 by which the country becomes healthy and fruitful,  
 which otherwise would be but as a barren desert.

*Thompson's Travels.*

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END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

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THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK THE SECOND,

## THE ARGUMENT.

*THE storm over, the rainbow appears, compared to a promise sent home to the believer under sickness, or a reprieve to a condemned malefactor; an address to Devotion; description of the country after the waters are abated; a simile; song of praise and thanksgiving; the Trinity invoked on the behalf of sinners; the benefits of prayer, and the object of it pointed out; a walk through the meadows; the Almighty appears in all his works; clouds a shelter from heat, the sad consequences of them in a storm, reflections thereon; noon described; an address to the Redeemer; heat decays flowers; sickness destroys beauty; Zepalinda's death, a thoughtless young woman; a grove described; a solemn song and prayer to God.*

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THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;  
OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.  
BOOK THE SECOND.

THE lightnings cease, the thunders roll no  
more,

The breaking clouds proclaim the tempest o'er,  
While less'ning waters check our restless fears,  
And in the north the cov'nant bow appears.\*

Like a sweet promise sent to cheer the soul, 5  
On whom the waves of sharp affliction roll. †

Or

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\* Jove's wondrous bow, of three celestial dyes,  
Plac'd as a sign to man, amidst the skies.

*Pope's Homer.*

† So cheers some pious saint a dying sinner,  
(Who trembled at the thoughts of pains to come)  
With Heav'n's forgiveness and the hopes of mercy.

*Rowe.*

Or as the welcome news of a reprieve,  
 To a poor wretch whom Satan's wiles deceive ;  
 Condemn'd by justice, near his shameful end,  
 In mercy's pardon'd and still lives to mend ; 10  
 O grant, all-gracious Heav'n, his future days  
 May be employ'd in grateful songs of praise ;  
 Whilst deep contrition fills his troubled mind,  
 May he forgiveness with his Saviour find.  
 Cleanse thou his Soul, O God ! whose mighty  
                     hand 15  
 Has call'd the waters off the fertile land ;  
 And give him grace which like the bow may prove  
 A constant sign of thy preserving love ; \*  
 From his polluted heart take ev'ry stain,  
 And ne'er permit him, Lord, to sin again. 20

ASSIST me, pure Devotion, while I trace  
 The God of Nature and the God of Grace  
 Thro' all his works. O thou celestial Maid,  
 Now condescend to grant thy sacred aid ;  
 Instruct an infant bard, in lofty lays 25  
 To sing the Great Almighty Maker's praise.

THE

THE plains forsaken by the floods, appear  
 In all the beauties of the smiling year;  
 The fields their variegated robes renew,  
 And pleasant prospects rise again to view; 30  
 The distant meads their verdant clothing wear,  
 And tuneful birds with music fill the air.  
 The neighbouring vallies late by floods oppress'd  
 In sight appear in deeper verdure drest.

LIKE the true christian whom the rod re-  
 fines, \* 35  
 Or as the sun eclips'd the brighter shines,  
 So may'st thou, Reader, freed from ev'ry sin,  
 When Death arrives a happier life begin;  
 Where storms and tempests shall for ever cease,  
 In endless regions of eternal peace. 40  
 (When clouds of doubt and dark'ning fears are  
 o'er,)

There may'st thou shine to be eclips'd no more. †  
 The sun appearing dries the humid earth,  
 And village swains resume their rural mirth.

While

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\* Isaiah xlviii. 10. Zachariah xiii. 9. 1 Peter i. 7.  
 Malachi iii. 3.

† Matthew xiii. 43. Daniel xii. 3.

While joy and gratitude their looks declare, 45  
For God's protecting and peculiar care.

Let me, unworthy, join to praise his name;  
Come, grateful Love, and all my breast inflame.

WHEN rising waters spread destruction round,  
And swelling billows men and cattle drown'd; 50  
When certain Death appear'd so near in view,  
He interpos'd, and straight the floods withdrew.  
At his command the boist'rous winds are still,  
The raging storm obeys his mighty will: \*  
He speaks, and lo! the tempest hears his  
voice, † 55  
His gracious words the delug'd earth rejoice.

O speak to Sinners overwhelm'd in sin,  
And still the storms which daily rage within;  
Call

\* Job xxxviii. 8, 10, 11. Psalm civ. 6, 7, 8, 9.

† The Christian in every trouble finds comfort from the reflection, that the God in whom he trusts has all nature at his command, and the keys of death, hell, and the grave in his possession; and not only is *able* but as *willing* to make all things work together for his good. Daniel iii. 17. Romans viii. 28.

Call off their thoughts from fixing here below,  
 Change Thou their hearts and banish ev'ry  
 woe. 60

THOU SUN of Righteousness, arise and shine,  
 Disperse their fears with quick'ning rays divine;  
 Clear up their doubts, these heavy clouds dispel,  
 Forgive their sins which sink them down to hell;  
 Then as believers will they ever sing 65  
 Thy wond'rous grace, O thou incarnate King!  
 Whilst echoing earth their grateful song retains,  
 And Jesu's name fills all the list'ning plains.

ETERNAL SPIRIT, melt their Souls to love,  
 Set their affections more on things above; 70  
 O cleanse their stubborn hearts defil'd with guilt,  
 And may their hopes be all on Jesus built.\*  
 Their

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\* Romans xv. 13. 1 John v. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

There is no other name given among men whereby  
 we can be saved, but the name of Jesus; no other  
 foundation can any man lay than that is laid, which  
 is Christ Jesus the Lord, who is the sum and substance  
 of the Gospel, in whom whosoever believeth shall live  
 though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in  
 him shall not die eternally. John xi. 25, 26. Acts iv. 12.

Their natures purify by sin deprav'd,  
 Their persons justify by vice enslav'd ;  
 Renew them wholly and throughout by grace 75  
 In soul and body, every stain deface ;  
 Comfort their minds, and teach them how to  
 pray,  
 For of themselves they know not what to say.  
 Help them to come with boldness to the throne,  
 And there in faith to make their troubles  
 known 80  
 To Him who ever lives the head and corner  
 stone.

By pray'r believers sweet communion gain ;  
 Ask and receive, none ever ask'd in vain.  
 This is the key which to a sinful race,  
 Unlocks the treasures of eternal grace. \* 85  
 By this alone thro' Jesus we receive  
 The greatest blessings that a God can give. †  
 THENCE

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\* The prayers of a righteous man availeth much.  
 James v. 16, 17, 18.

† Matthew vii. 7. Mark xi. 24.

A Soul in commerce with her God, is heaven ;  
 Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life ;  
 The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart.

*Dr. Young.*

THENCE learn in ev'ry trouble where to go,  
 Put not your confidence in things below ;  
 On Christ depend, to him for succour fly, 90  
 Believe in him and you shall never die,  
 But life eternal thro' his merits gain,  
 Who died on *Earth* that we in *Heav'n* might  
 reign. \*

As thro' the verdant meads I pass along,  
 Far from the crouded city's noisy throng ; 95  
 With secret pleasure all around I view,  
 The works of God stupendous, wise, and true ; †  
 His finger's seen in every blade of grass,  
 His hand appears in every scene I pass ;  
 Whilst waving crops his bounteous goodness  
 show, ‡ 100  
 The winds his plenty thro' the nations blow.  
 Meandering rivers as they gently glide  
 His praises murmur ; and on every side  
 The fields and meadows with his bounty crown'd,  
 Show his munificence to all around. || 105

D

So

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\* John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Revelation i. 5, 6.

† Hebrews i. 10. ‡ Jeremiah v. 24.

|| Deuteronomy xi. 14, 15.

So thro' thy life may grace appear and shine,  
 With thy profession may thy practice join,  
 To show thy faith, and prove thy birth divine.\* }  
 O may thy path like yonder chearing ray,  
 Still brighter shine unto the perfect day; † 110  
 And ev'ry sore affliction only prove,  
 The means to fit thee for the world above. ‡

• THE shifting clouds with watry stores replete,  
 In Summer yield a shelter from the heat,  
 Or softly melting into gentle show'rs 115  
 Refresh the earth and chear the drooping flow'rs.  
 But

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\* Faith without works is dead: show me thy faith without thy works, and I'll shew thee my faith by my works; by the fruit is the tree known: 'tis not merely professing religion, but living up to the rules of it, that proves a man a Christian. Matthew xii. 33, 35, 37. Chap. vii. 21.

† Proverbs iv. 18.

‡ The great similarity between these and several other lines in the following Poem, together with the repetitions on the *same* subject, will not (it is hoped) be disgusting; as the author's chief design through the whole, is to reconcile the Christian to every affliction he may meet with, by reminding him, there is a *need* be for all. 1 Peter i. 6.

But when Jehovah gives the dread command,  
 To overwhelm a guilty sinful land;  
 Like horrid cataracts they quick descend,  
 The rivers swell and in a deluge end. 120

Thus every mercy he can soon remove,  
 And make our greatest comforts curses prove.  
 Then let it, Christian, be thy daily pray'r,  
 (However num'rous thy enjoyments are)

Most Gracious God, from whom all goodness  
 flows, 125

*Bless* Thou the blessings which thine hand be-  
 flows. \*

BUT lo! the sun hath gain'd the middle sky,  
 The fleecy clouds his ardent presence fly; †  
 Without a spot the azure heav'ns appear,  
 Fair as the day and as the season clear. 130

D 2

Now

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\* Proverbs x. 22.

† 'Tis raging noon, and vertical the sun  
 Darts on the head direct his forceful rays;  
 O'er heav'n and earth, far as the ranging eye  
 Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns; and all  
 From pole to pole is undistinguish'd blaze.

*Thomson*

Now distant hills are scorch'd by sultry beams,  
 And the whole country like Vesuvius seems.  
 The lab'ring hind to some cool shade repairs,  
 And in his slumbers still pursues his cares ;  
 Whilst lowing oxen with the bleating sheep, 135  
 Beneath the trees or under hedges sleep ;  
 Aerial songsters seek the leafy groves,  
 And faintly warble out their little loves.  
 The pensive angler in yon cave reclines,  
 To sweet repose his weary limbs resigns, 140  
 While o'er the plain the sun resistless shines. }  
 Thus shine, thou Son of God, in ev'ry Soul,  
 Burn up our vices and our sins controul.  
 With unremitting ardour let thy rays  
 (As grass is wither'd by the noon-tide blaze) \* 145  
 Destroy our evil habits, ere they grow,  
 And ripen into fruits of endless woe.

As now the thirsty ground in chinks appears,  
 And seems to ask the cloud's refreshing tears ;  
 As hunted harts pant for the cooling brook, 150  
 So may our Souls alone to Jesus look ; †

And

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James i. 11.

† Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

And in his love unbounded long to lave,  
Whose healing streams the blest partakers save.

BEFORE the heat the flowery race decay,  
And all their beauties drooping fade away : 155  
So fade the fair when sore afflictions reign,  
And deadly fevers boil in ev'ry vein, \*  
The beauty then no longer boasts her charms,  
But each new pain produces fresh alarms.  
While full of horrors by reflection led, 160  
She mourns the time without improvement fled,  
Or raving senseless meets her dreadful end,  
Without a God, a Father, or a Friend. †

So inconfid'rate Zephalinda died,  
Just in the bloom of youth and beauty's pride ; 165

D 3

Whose

\* Who can unpitying see the flowery race  
Shed by the morn, their new-flush'd bloom resign  
Before the parching beam? So fade the fair,  
When fevers revel thro' their azure veins.

*Thomson.*

† Proverbs xv. 29. Deuteronomy xxxi. 17. Trust  
not to a death-bed repentance, lest being deprived of  
reason by the violence of disorders, you are entirely  
prevented from improving your latter moments, and  
rush into an awful eternity unprepared.

Whose *sole* delight was merely to be fine,  
 At balls, the play-house, or at court to shine ;  
 Whose *only* aim to catch the roving eye,  
 With all the colours of a summer's fly.

Her beaut'ous face but serv'd to make her  
 vain, 170

And love of admiration prov'd her bane :  
 Returning late one evening from the play,  
 (Where oft she went to pass the hours away ;  
 In each new fashion sure to be attir'd,  
 By coxcombs flatter'd, and by fools admir'd ;) 175

A dread disorder seiz'd her tender frame,  
 And soon, too soon, her lovely form became  
 A feast for worms ; without one moment giv'n,  
 To beg forgiveness, or prepare for Heav'n.

Thy late admirers and *pretended* friends, 180

Who waited on thy smiles for diff'rent ends,  
 Where are they now ? O, Zephalinda, say !  
 Forever fled ;—the well proportion'd clay

To dust returning, charms the sight no more ;  
 The pleasing farce, the golden dream is o'er ; 185  
 While the poor Soul *neglected*, takes her flight

To doleful regions of eternal night. \*

Learn

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\* Matthew viii. 12.

Learn hence, ye lively and engaging fair,  
 To make your *minds* your *chief*, your *only* care.  
 For death, ere long, will close the brightest eyes, \*  
 But Virtue, Heav'n-born Virtue, *never* dies. †

WHILST noon prevails I'll seek the neighb'ring  
 grove,  
 There coolly-shaded unmolested rove,  
 Thro' devious walks and bowery mazes stray,  
 Till Sol declining sheds a milder day. † 195  
 These calm retreats my contemplation aid,  
 Here lofty trees afford a pleasing shade, §

D 4.

And

\* Psalm lxxxix. 4. Psalm xlix. 14. Proverbs  
 xxxi. 30.

Beauty like a flower soon fades; be concern'd then,  
 ye Virgins, to improve your charms with inward great-  
 ness, unaffected wisdom, and sanctity of manners.

Cato.

† Be mental charms your never-fading bloom,  
 Internal beauty will survive the tomb.

‡ - - - - - 'Tis pleasing thus  
 To wander thoughtful thro' the sylvan grove  
 At fragrant morn, scorched noon, or dewy eve.

Browne's Sunday Thoughts.

§ Still let me pierce into the midnight depth  
 Of yonder grove, of wildest, largest growth;  
 That forming high in air, a woodland quire  
 Nods o'er the mount beneath.

Thomson.

And various flowers disregarded bloom,  
While birds unnotic'd warble thro' the gloom,  
Along the center glides a purling stream, 200  
Whose gentle murmurs well deserve my theme.  
It's flowery banks compose a rural seat,  
In shades surrounded, and secur'd from heat ;  
Here the sad lover oft repairs alone  
When evening comes, to make his plaintive  
moan ; 205  
Or pensive wanders thro' the lonely meads,  
Which way his melancholy temper leads ;  
On every tree he carves the much-lov'd name,  
And idly calls them to attest his flame ;  
While jealous thoughts their poison swift im-  
part, 210  
And scenes of horrid rivals rend his aching heart.

O MAY the Saviour's Image deep imprest,  
By the good Spirit, warm the reader's breast ;  
Inspire his soul with love beyond compare,  
And make him jealous of a rival *there*. 215

As ent'ring Nature's Fane, it leads my soul,  
To the great Architect, who form'd the whole,  
Whose

Whose mighty hand this verdant fabric rais'd,  
Thro' ev'ry nation may his name be prais'd.

ON either side the black'ning shades  
increase, 220  
Be hush't my fears, ye fancy'd horrors cease;  
This sylvan temple is th' abode of peace, \*  
Here aged oaks appear in various rows,  
There stately elms a verdant arch compose;  
Whose spreading branches intermixt on high, 225  
Prevent the sun-beams, and obscure the sky.  
Here the sweet songsters of the grove repair,  
To shun the heat, and nurse their tender care;  
Or crows in *rural* architecture skill'd,  
Their pendant nurs'ries near each other build; †  
Whilst far beneath the bees assiduous roam, 231  
Anxious to bear mellifluent treasures home;  
And from each flow'r extracts delicious juice,  
By nature taught, for man's peculiar use.

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\* - - - - - At every step  
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,  
And all is awful list'ning gloom around.

*Thomson.*

† - - - - - who high amid the boughs  
In early spring, his airy city builds.

*Thomson.*

Hence, sluggard, learn, bid indolence away, 235

Redeem the time, improve the passing day ;

Another morn may never rise to thee,

For on each moment hangs eternity. \*

In woods the patriarchs of old retir'd, 239

To worship God with holy zeal inspir'd ; †

In such retreats the hermit spent his days,

In heav'nly contemplation, pray'r, and praise ;

And liv'd on Nature's common free from care,

His drink the spring, wild fruits his daily fare.

HERE let me oft' enjoy the cooling breeze, 245

From noon defended by umbrageous trees ;

The pleasing gloom invites to solemn thought, }

Calls off the mind with vain ideas fraught }

To *Him*, who all things out of nothing  
brought. ‡

MAKER Supreme ! whose every word's a

law, 250

Impress my soul with reverential awe ;

O Thou

\* Matthew xxv. 13. Numbers xvi. 21. Luke xii. 20.

† Thus liv'd the patriarchal race of old,  
Kings of the verdant plain and fleecy fold.

*Brown.*

‡ Colossians i. 16.

O Thou ! array'd in robes of glorious light  
 Ineffable,—assist my tow'ring flight ;  
 Fain would I soar above *terrestrial* things,  
 And sing of thee, Almighty King of Kings ! 255  
 Here in this grove, approve my humble lays,  
 Forgive my failings, and accept my praise.

HAIL, Lord of Heav'n and earth, by all rever'd,  
 By saints surrounded, and by devils fear'd, \*  
 To whom, the bright and spotless seraphs  
     bend, 260  
 And round the throne thy great behests attend,  
 At whose dread footstool angels bow the knee,  
 In deep prostration to the sacred Three ;  
 Jehovah infinite ! who reign'st on high,  
 In mercy hear a trembling sinner's cry : 265

THOU bidst the sun its chearing beams display,  
 “ Thou also mad'st the night, and Thou the day.  
 Sea, earth, air, heav'n, thy boundless wisdom  
     show,  
 Thy gracious will returning seasons know ; †

At

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\* James ii. 19. Jude 14. † Daniel ii. 21.

At thy command the fields are cloth'd with  
corn, \* 270

And spreading leaves the lofty trees adorn ;  
The woods and groves with waving honors  
crown'd,

Display thy goodness ; whilst the birds resound  
From every bough thy praise, All nature's God !  
Thou Great First Cause ! whose all-consuming  
rod 275

Shook o'er a guilty world ere long shall prove,  
The just avenger of thy slighted love ; †  
Hasten the blessed time, Thou Great Su-  
preme !

When true Religion like a mighty stream, ‡  
Shall overflow this highly-favor'd land, 280  
Blest with the choicest blessings of thine hand,  
Engage our hearts to fear thy sacred name,  
With gospel ardor every soul inflame ;  
O may thy church and people here below,  
As Leb'non flourish, and as cedars grow ; 285  
In

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\* Joel ii. 19. Psalm cxlv. 15.

† Isaiah xi. 4.

‡ Amos v. 24.

In grace increasing daily more and more,  
Like sands for number on the ocean's shore ;  
Give to the King thy mighty judgments, Lord,  
Long may he reign according to thy word ;  
The Queen his royal consort truly blest, 290  
(Give to their sons and daughters Righteousness,)  
May they the hearts of all their subjects gain,  
And peace with plenty crown their happy reign.  
Make, gracious God ! their officers of state  
As truly good as thou hast made them great ; 295  
Teach them to have (and that *alone* pursue)  
The *real* interest of the land in view ;  
Grant we may all thy chosen people be,  
And after death forever reign with thee ;  
Let strife and discord thro' the nation cease, 300  
And *temp'ral* prove an earnest of *eternal* peace.  
Thus shall thy glorious name be known,  
And by the world ador'd ;  
Whilst ev'ry kingdom joins to own,  
*Thee, Universal Lord.* 305

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK THE THIRD.

## THE ARGUMENT.

**T**HE afternoon describ'd; bathing, with some reflections applicable to youth; an affecting story; an address to Heaven for the rising generation; Richmond hill, with the prospects around it; address to the favourites of fortune; the pleasures of religion; an allegorical prayer; the evening's approach; time of walking; self-examination recommended; a summer's evening describ'd; sun-set; Night; darkness, an emblem of a guilty soul in despair; Altamont a libertine; his death; virtue its own reward; the silence of the night, represents the tranquillity of a dying christian; the life and death of Theron a true believer; the happiest men are such who act their several parts best on the stage of life.

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THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;  
OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK THE THIRD.

WITH raging noon the sultry hours are  
fled,

And milder beams a softer influence shed;  
The birds again fly warbling thro' the air,  
And hinds awake to different toils repair;  
The angler hastens with renew'd delight, 5  
To throw the line and wait the pleasing bite;  
The neighb'ring flocks no longer pant with heat,  
But gently rising leave their cool retreat,  
Whilst distant mountains echo bleat for bleat. \*

E

The

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\* 'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,  
Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleats  
Of flocks thick nibbling thro' the clover'd vale.

*Thomson's Summer.*

The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds  
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

*Milton.*

The vig'rous swain now seeks the well known  
pool, 10

Whose banks are shady, and whose waters cool ;  
There pleas'd, he wades along the yielding plain,  
Health strings his nerves and runs thro' ev'ry vein ;  
Surrounding bushes hide him from the sight,  
While trees umbrageous scarce admit the light. 15  
In yonder brook thus have I bath'd unseen,  
Where bending willows form a verdant screen ;  
Preserv'd, O God ! by thine Almighty arm,  
Which saves in danger and secures from harm ;  
Upholds in sickness and supports in grief, 20  
In ev'ry trouble gives a sure relief ;  
Which shall at last my staff of comfort prove,  
And bear my soul (thro' Grace \*) to realms of  
love. †

As some poor thoughtless youth unlearn't in sin,  
When strong unruly passions rage within ; 25  
(Whilst

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\* Romans viii. 38, 39, a true christian is warranted  
to hope for salvation through the merits and mediation  
of a once crucified but now exalted Lord.

† Heaven is all love ; all joy in giving joy.

Dr. Young.

{ Whilſt Pleaſure courts him with her ſiren ſmiles,  
And Vice enſnares him with her treacherous  
wiles ; \*)

Is checkt at firſt by modeſt bluſhing ſhame,  
And inexperienc'd trembles at the name ;  
In doubt and fear he ſlowly goes aſtray, 30 }  
Till conſcience harden'd he forgets to pray,  
And every good impreſſion ſins away. † }

So on the margin of the brook I ſtand,  
But half reſolv'd to quit the ſafer land ;  
Shiv'ring awhile th' inverted landſcape view, 35  
And undetermin'd know not which to do ;  
At length by ſlow degrees I leave the ſhore,  
And plunging headlong fear the depth no more.

HENCE early learn to baniſh from within,  
The firſt tho' ſmall appearances of ſin ; 40  
Far from thy breaſt thy darling vice remove,  
Shun bad companions leſt they fatal prove ; †

E 2

Dare

\* Proverbs vii. 21, 22, 23.

† John xii. 40. Matthew xiii. 15.

Youth can never be too cautious of ſinful compli-  
ances at their firſt ſetting out in life ; a great deal  
depends on what company they keep, and what plea-  
ſures they purſue.

† 1 Corinthians v. 11.

Dare not to parley with th' infernal foe,  
Nor think no further but thus far to go ; \*  
Of this deceit, young man, in time beware, 45  
For 'tis in *youth* a common tho' destructive snare.  
“ He that once sins, like him who slides on ice,  
“ Goes swiftly down the slipp'ry paths of vice ;  
“ Tho' conscience checks him, yet those rubs  
gone o'er,  
“ He sins securely and looks back no more. 50  
“ Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,  
“ As brooks make rivers, rivers swell to seas. †”

CLEANDER thus, that noble gen'rous youth,  
Was first deluded to forsake the truth ;  
Then vile associates robb'd his tender mind, 55  
Of all impressions of a *virtuous* kind ;  
The sabbath-day with these he would profane,  
While drunkenness and harlots prov'd his bane. †

His

\* Proverbs iv. 14, 15. chap. vi. 27, 28.

† Remember, youth, no one ever became abandon'd all at once, but many have had great cause to rue their *first* deviations from the paths of virtue and sobriety.

‡ Sabbath breaking, debauchery and wine, have been confest by numbers of unhappy young fellows, the first and principal reasons of their coming to an untimely end.

His pious father view'd him with concern,  
 And often weeping beg'd him to return ; 60  
 But vice too sadly reign'd in every part, \*  
 Which quickly broke a sorrowing mother's heart ;  
 Who thus in tears th' unhappy youth address'd,  
 " Attend, Cleander, to my last request  
 " Before too late ; forsake your evil ways, 65  
 " For they have shorten'd your poor mother's  
 " days : †  
 " O might I live to see my darling son  
 " Incline to virtue (but *God's* will be done ;)  
 " In songs of praise I'd spend my latest breath,  
 " And trusting in my Saviour, welcome death. 70

E 3

" Lord !

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\* To deliberate with sin, is like a moth flying about a candle, which it seldom, if ever, does long without being burnt.

† If parents would be more solicitous for the *morals* of their children, and concern'd to establish their tender minds in the love and practice of religion and virtue, by a pious example and admonitions, they would be well rewarded for their trouble, in beholding the happy effects of such an education, in the lives and conversation of their offspring. Proverbs xxii. 6.

" Lord ! grant whenever I leave this world  
of strife,

" My *death* may prove my *son's eternal life* :"

Then overcome with grief she turn'd aside,  
And just was heard to say *farewell*, and died.

'Twas now too late, the lost Cleander found 75

His hopes in vain to heal the fatal wound,  
Which sin had made within his tainted breast,  
By vice polluted, and with crimes oppress'd ;

The thoughtless youth too harden'd to amend, }  
And through imprudence left by ev'ry }  
friend, 80 }

Soon met a just but ignominious end.

THUS Satan triumphs, when he brings the soul,  
From smaller crimes \* to sin without controul ;

The young and gay by tempting pleasures won }  
To seek the company they ought to shun, 85 }  
Are first deluded, and are then undone.

PROFITIOUS Heav'n, in mercy deign to smile,  
On ev'ry youth of Britain's happy isle ;

O may their tender hearts to good incline,  
Grow as the corn and flourish as the vine ; 90

When

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\* Nemo repente fuit turpissimus: Hebrews iii. 13.

When hell attempts to make them go astray,  
 Omniscient Father ! guide their early way ;  
 Direct their steps to virtue's blest abode,  
 And may religion lead their souls to God.

Now let me soar on Fancy's eagle wing, 95  
 And in more rural numbers strive to sing

Thy beauties, Richmond, and thy green retreats,  
 " At once the Monarch's and the Muses seats ;  
 Whose lofty hill commands on ev'ry side,  
 A view of Nature in her sylvan pride. \* 100  
 Here verdant fields and flow'ry meadows rise,  
 There azure mountains touch the bending skies ;  
 Whilst far beneath, the Thames meand'ring flows,  
 Whose silver stream a heav'n inverted shows ;  
 And as it gently glides, on either hand, 105  
 Dispenses blessings thro' our fertile land :  
 Thus for the poor, the starving, and distressed,  
 May charity abound in every breast ; †  
 And genuine godliness, without controul,  
 Flow like this ample stream in ev'ry soul, 110

E 4

YE

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\* Read the description of Richmond Hill in Thomson's Summer, line 1406.

† 1 Corinthians xiv. 1. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 8.

Ye fortune's fav'rites, who abound in wealth,  
 And ye *more* blest, enjoying constant health;  
 Let this your *chief* your *greatest* pleasure be,  
 From want or pain to set the wretched free;  
 And show your gratitude for mercies giv'n, 115  
 By charity to men and thanks to Heav'n. \*

WHAT beaut'ous landscapes all around appear,  
 Drest in the liv'ry of the smiling year;  
 Where'er I turn my eager wand'ring eyes,  
 New scenes delight me and new prospects rise: 120  
 On yonder spot majestic Windsor's seen,  
 Whose stately Forest deck't in chearful green,  
 Shall ever flourish in immortal lays,  
 While Pope's harmonious numbers speak its praise;  
 The sister hills at distance I descry, 125  
 There lofty Harrow lifts its spire on high: †  
 In every part fresh beauties rise to view,  
 The varied prospects still are ever new;

Like

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\* Ephesians v. 20. Colossians iv. 17. 1 Corinthians xiii.

† . . . . .

Now to the sister hills that skirt her plain,  
 To lofty Harrow now, and now to where  
 Majestic Windsor lifts his princely brow.

Thomson.

Like the sweet truths the sacred Scriptures yield,  
 On Contemplation's mount, by faith reveal'd; 130  
 From which believers daily comfort gain,  
 A balm for ev'ry wound, a cure for ev'ry pain. \*

SAY, happy Christian (for thou sure must know)  
 What inward pleasures from religion flow?  
 Pleasures as lasting, as they're truly sweet, 135  
 The springs of joy unfading and compleat.  
 Both worlds she *freely* promises to give,  
 To those alone who by her precepts live;  
 This world with all things *really* good and great,  
 And life eternal in a future state. † 140  
 Pleas'd with the scenes which all around appear,  
 Fain would I hold a peaceful dwelling here,  
 Whilst genial summer rules the changing year. }  
 Far from the town, remote from noise and strife,  
 Here let me live a pleasant country life; ‡ 145  
 Be

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\* 2 Peter i. 4. Romans viii. 17.

† 1 Timothy iv. 8. vi. 6.

‡ O far from cities my abode remove,  
 To realms of innocence and peace and love.

*Brown on the Universe.*

And if unblam'd my fond desires might plead,

A little cottage on the lonely mead

Should be my choice. *Brown on the Universe.*

Be this delightful hill my calm abode,  
 To study Nature and converse with God.  
 Here, while the pleasing landscapes I survey,  
 (Which court my fancy and invite my stay;  
 Hills, valleys, meads, and yonder winding  
 stream, 150

The rural subjects of my present theme)  
 O may my thoughts (as trees shoot upward) rise,  
 Above the region of these lower skies.  
 And dwell on things celestial and divine,  
 Whilst pure devotion runs thro' every line. 155

IMMORTAL Father, all creation's Lord !  
 Who form'd the Heavens by thy pow'rful word,  
 And made the earth for man's peculiar care,  
 The sea for fishes, and for birds the air,  
 Who clothes the fields with grass or ripening  
 corn, 160

The reader's mind with inward grace adorn,  
 Thy sacred image on his heart impress,  
 And clothe his soul in Jesu's Righteousness.  
 As yonder hills appear to meet the sky,\*  
 May his affections thus ascend on high ;

And

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\* Highgate and Hampstead.

And rais'd by Grace on wings of faith and love,  
Tho' here below, appear to live above ; \*

While pressing forward in his christian course,  
(Like yonder river hast'ning to its source †)

Do thou, O God ! his help and shield appear ; 170  
(And as a plenteous harvest crowns the year)  
May sure success on all his dealings wait,  
And glory be his portion in a future state.

BUT lo ! the sun is hast'ning to the west,  
In all the grandeur of a monarch drest ; 175  
Now is the time to walk the neighb'ring fields,  
(While every breeze refreshing coolness yields ;)  
To seek the plains or thro' the meadows stray,  
While yon bright orb emits a yellower ray, 179  
And length'ning shadows show declining day. ‡

Thus

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\* Colossians iii. 2.

† The Thames.

‡ . . . . . The approach of night,  
The skies yet blushing with departing light,  
When falling dews with spangles deck'd the glade,  
And the low sun had lengthen'd every shade.

*Pope.*

Now the day wears, the sun-beams faintly bound,  
And taller shadows stretch along the ground.

*Blackmore.*

Thus life, with all its joys, when death is near,  
Will but a shadow in itself appear, \*

To an eternity of bliss or woe,  
To which the unimbodied soul must go;

For after death two states alone remain, 185

Eternal pleasure, or eternal pain. †

Then ask thyself, nor think the questions strange,

Am I prepar'd to meet the awful change?

Have I believ'd in Christ the sinner's friend?

Do I on him or on myself depend? 190

Have I acknowledg'd God in all my ways? ‡

In ev'ry word and action liv'd his praise?

Is sin my hatred, godliness my aim?

Am I in life a christian as in name?

Do I adorn the doctrines I believe? 195

Or by hypocrisy my soul deceive? §

How have my fleeting hours been *daily* spent,

In every station have I learn't content?

What

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\* 1 Chronicles xxix. 15. † Matthew xxv. 46.

Daniel xii. 2. John v. 29. ‡ Proverbs iii. 6.

§ Matthew xvi. 26. chap. xxiv. 51.

Seeming devotion, does but gild a knave,  
That's neither faithful, honest, just nor brave;  
But where religion does with virtue join,  
It makes an hero like an angel shine. *Waller.*

What solid ground have I to hope at last,  
 God will forgive my sins and follies past? 200  
 Let every reader thus without delay,  
 With self-examination close *each* day. \*

Is life a shadow? are our days a span?  
 What then is frail and feeble creature man?  
 A worm of earth whose race will soon be  
     o'er, 205  
 Alive to-day, to-morrow seen no more. †  
 That time is short, the Scriptures oft declare,  
 Then for eternity let all prepare;

Our

---

\* Nor let soft slumber close thine eyes,  
 Before you've recollected thrice,  
 The train of actions thro' the day,  
 Where have my feet chose out their way?  
 What have I learnt where'er I've been?  
 From all I've heard, from all I've seen?  
 What know I more that's worth the knowing?  
 What have I done that's worth the doing?  
 What have I sought; that I should shun?  
 Or into what new follies run?  
 What duties have I left undone?  
 These self-enquiries are the road,  
 That lead to virtue and to God.

*Watts's Improvement of the Mind.*

*Vide Mason on Self-knowledge.*

† Job xiv. 1, 2, 12.

Our length'ning years (like evening shades)  
portend

The day of our existence near its end ; 210

Improve the present moments ere they fly,

None are too old to mend, or young to die. \*

THE air serene invites the chearful swain,  
From daily toil to seek the verdant plain,  
There join'd by neighb'ring youths, in harmless  
play 215

And rural games, to spend the falling day.

Now gloomy woods or pathless meadows prove,

The lonely haunts of solitary love, †

While evening draws her shadowy curtains round,

And silence reigns o'er all the dusky ground. ‡

As

\* Ecclesiastes xi. 9, 10. chap. xii. 1.

† . . . . Now from the world,  
Sacred to sweet retirement, lovers steal.

*Thomson.*

To glimmering shades and sympathetic glooms  
Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling stream  
Romantic hangs, there thro' the pensive desk  
Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation lost,  
Indulging all to love.

*Thomson.*

‡ Now came still evening on, and twilight grey,  
Had in her sober liv'ry all things clad. *Milton.*

As now declines the splendid orb of day, 221  
 The western clouds a beauteous scene display, \*  
 Some cloth'd in purple, others ting'd with gold,  
 Whose various shapes romantic views unfold ;  
 Here edg'd with crimson fleecy waves appear, 225  
 There blushing ruins deck the ruddy sphere,  
 While hills on hills to mimic fancy rise,  
 And rural landskips paint the glowing skies ; †  
 Till with the setting sun's diverging rays,  
 The pleasing prospect into smoke decays. 230  
 Now to the woods the tuneful birds repair,  
 And lull'd to sleep their warbling songs forbear.  
 Home from the meads return the weary'd swains,  
 While flocks and herds lie slumb'ring on the plains.  
 Now

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\* . . . . The shifting clouds  
 Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train  
 In all their pomp, attend his setting throne.  
*Thomson.*

† His rays play upward, in the fleecy clouds  
 That swiftly pencil'd, dress a mimic scene  
 In fancy's eye, of groves, and whiten'd Alps,  
 And towers romantic, rear'd compleat, or waste  
 In ruin'd majesty, with interspace  
 Of golden Ether and Elysian plain.

*Brown's Sunday Thoughts.*

Now chilling dews lament departing light, 235  
 And distant prospects vanish from the sight,  
 While sober ev'ning yields the world to night. }  
 As silent darkness spreads her black'ning veil,  
 O'er meadows, hills, and every verdant dale;  
 The vary'd scene around me, gradual fades, 240  
 And all creation's wrapt in deep'ning shades; \*  
 So when sharp pains the night of death declare,  
 The soul is often whelm'd in dark despair,  
 And as the shades conceal each pleasing view,  
 Distressing doubts and fears his hopes subdue; 245  
 Alarm his conscience, raise an inward strife,  
 Increase his horrors, and but end with life. †

THUS died poor Altamont, the young and brave,  
 Estrang'd to virtue, and to vice a slave,  
 Who early fell (through passion's conquering  
 wiles) 250  
 A hapless victim to the harlot's smiles. ‡

In

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\* *Night*, fable goddess! from her *ebon* throne  
 In rayless majesty, now stretches forth  
 Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world.

*Young.*

† See the death of Francis Spira.

‡ Proverbs v. 5th to the 11th verse.

In taste a libertine, in temper gay,  
 Immers'd in pleasures and to lust a prey;  
 Deaf to advice, foe to *himself* alone, \*  
 In actions headstrong, and to folly prone. 255  
 Thoughtless of God and of a future state,  
 Thus unprepar'd he met his wretched fate;  
 His handsome person was his greatest snare,  
 This made him court and courted by the fair,  
 Fond of intrigue, he was at heart a rake, 260  
 Wont to deceive, then ruin, then forsake;  
 A fatal wound one evening prov'd his end,  
 The cause of vice endeavoring to defend;  
 Three hours he linger'd in the greatest pain,  
 While ev'ry art was try'd, but try'd in vain. 265

O SAY, what words his fear of death could tell,  
 When fill'd with dread he cry'd, " I'm doom'd  
 " to hell;

F

" To

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\* Tho' the example of vicious men may be (and too often is) fatal to those *around* them, yet they must be reckon'd by the Christian (while persisting in the ways of sin) fighting against *themselves*, and in the end will be found the greatest enemies of their *own* souls. The vices of some men hurt none but those who practise them.

" To live with devils in eternal woe, \*  
 " Without one gleam of hope; for *God's my foe* : †  
 " I'm lost forever; whither shall I fly? 270 }  
 " I want a Saviour, but no friend is nigh; }  
 Then breath'd his last, unfit to live or die.  
 From such examples let the living know,  
 " Virtue alone is happiness below; "  
 Vice its own punishment will ever prove; 275  
 Religion only leads to realms above.

SILENT as Nature overspread with shades,  
 While not a sound the list'ning ear invades, ‡  
 Still

\* However the young and gay may spend their hours  
 in the eager pursuit of fashionable amusements and un-  
 lawful pleasures, unmindful of an hereafter, let sick-  
 ness, pain, and the terrors of death overtake them, and  
 they will readily own their folly, and earnestly wish to  
 be forgiven (it may be) too late.

*Cave Juvenis, nam tuum periculum est major quam  
 cogitas.*

† I will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their  
 fear cometh. Proverbs i. 26, 27, 28.

‡ Silence, how dead! and darkness how profound!  
 Nor eye nor list'ning ear an object finds;  
 Creation sleeps.

. . . . .  
 Ev'n silent night proclaims my soul immortal;  
 Ev'n silent night proclaims eternal day. *Young.*

Still as creation in the depth of night,  
(When ghastly dreams the guilty soul affright) 280

So true believers calmly finish life,

Unknown to trouble, free from inward strife;

Thus well assur'd whatever is, is *best*, \*

They die in peace and enter into rest. †

So may'st thou tread death's gloomy cypress  
vale; 285

By faith supported all its terrors hail; ‡

And ripe for Heav'n leave every comfort here,

Without a sigh, a murmur, or a tear.

Thus happy Theron late resign'd his breath,

First gave his soul to God, then welcom'd  
death; 290

Long did he walk in true Religion's ways,

His works were charity, his words were praise;

His actions virt'ous, godliness his aim,

His only glory was in Jesu's name;

Of temper chearful, of a generous mind, 295

Friend to the wretched, to the needy kind,

F 2

Just

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\* Romans viii. 28.

† Isaiah xxvi. 3.

‡ Hebrews xi.

His hand the good man fastens on the skies,  
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

Young:

Just in his dealings, upright and sincere,  
 To vice a stranger, and from folly clear.  
 The Scriptures were his true unerring guide ;  
 He liv'd a christian, and a christian died, 300  
 And now triumphant dwells with saints above,  
 In blissful realms of everlasting love. \*

Hence, reader, lay these words to heart,  
 Not he who acts the *greatest* part,  
 But he who acts the *best*, will be 305  
 The happiest man eternally. †

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\* Matthew xxv. 46. John v. 29.

† Acts x. 34, 35. Deuteronomy x. 17. 1 Peter i. 17.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;  
OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

## THE ARGUMENT.

*MOONLIGHT* describ'd; Spirits, the time of their appearance, their existence chiefly ideal; permitted only on some extraordinary occasions; an address to Contemplation; the Moon an emblem of faith; Life, a dream; the value of blessings known by their loss; the great Creator of heaven and earth, the believer's guide and defence; a comfortable thought under affliction; the necessity of early repentance urg'd, from the consideration of the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death; night ending in day; afflictions the way to glory, a strong argument for resignation and contentment under divine dispensations; the clock striking; its address to man; night useful as day; troubles necessary as health; conclusion.

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THE  
RURAL CHRISTIAN;  
OR, THE  
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

**B**EHOLD! to sooth the rugged brow of  
night,

The moon arising yields a silver light,  
And twinkling stars unnumber'd deck the sphere,  
While rural scenes in shadowy robes appear. \*  
Now is the time when restless ghosts are said 5  
To haunt the tombs or stalk along the glade,  
Or seek the ruins of some mould'ring tow'r, †  
Where owls scream hideous thro' the midnight  
hour.

But treat such notions with a just disdain,  
As mere delusions of a sickly brain. 10

F 4

THO'

---

\* ————— Now reigns  
Full orb'd, the moon, and with more pleasing light  
Shadowy sets off the face of things. *Milton.*

† See Hervey on the Night, page 50.

Tho' 'tis confess that such appear'd of old,  
 Some great momentous secret to unfold,  
 By Heav'n's command ; on gracious errands sent,  
 To clear the guiltless, or some guilt prevent,  
 We're not to judge (as many do) from hence, 15  
 They visit earth on every light pretence ;  
 Oft at the chambers of the restless wait,  
 As the appointed messengers of fate ;  
 Or in the ghastly vestments of the dead,  
 Haunt the lone mansion, \* or thro' meadows  
 tread, 20

And nightly terrify the weary swain,  
 (As home returning o'er the dewy plain)  
 In various shapes, as village stories tell ;  
 Such spectres only in the fancy dwell, †  
 Ideal ghosts, which but exist in thought, 25  
 And haunt those heads alone, with idle whimsies  
 fraught.

# WHILE

\* . . . . The lonely tower  
 Is also shunn'd ; whose mournful chambers hold,  
 So night-struck fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.

*Thomson's Summer.*

† Now the timorous imagination teems with phan-  
 toms, and creates numberless terrors to itself.

*Hervey on Night.*

WHILE some weak minds with apparitions }  
 teem, }  
 And in their sleep, of horrid phantoms dream, }  
 Come, sacred Contemplation ! aid my theme, }  
 Help me to meditate Jehovah's praise, 30  
 Whose wond'rous works demand my highest lays.

BUT hark ! what sounds my ravish'd ears delight,  
 And charm the silence of the peaceful night, \*  
 From yonder grove ? (at noon my cool retreat,  
 From rain a shelter, and a shade from heat.) 35  
 'Tis the sweet Nightingale's melodious strains,  
 Night's lone musician ; warbler of the plains ; †  
 Whose pleasing notes the shades of evening chear,  
 While genial Summer rules the changing year. ‡  
 So when the Christian's overwhelm'd with grief, 40  
 Hope cheers his sorrows, yields a kind relief ;  
 Softens

---

\* All things are hush'd, as Nature's self lay dead,  
 The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head ;  
 The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,  
 And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dew sweat.

*Dryden.*

† The warbling bird . . . . .  
 Tunes sweetest her love-labour'd song.

‡ She all night long her am'rous descant sings,  
 Trills her thick warbled notes the summer long.

*Milton.*

Softens his pain, and comfort will impart,  
While love to Christ possesses all his heart.

IN solemn pomp, the moon with borrow'd ray,  
Rides thro' the Heav'ns, and sheds a softer day. 45  
While fix'd and planetary orbs around,  
With living spangles deck the blue profound.  
Majestic scene ! where worlds on worlds appear,  
And starry diamonds animate the sphere ;  
(To pilgrims oft a pleasing welcome sight,) 50  
And kindly dissipate the gloom of night. \*  
So when the pious Christian, near his end,  
For strength and succour does on Christ depend ;  
True faith lights up the dreary vale of tears,  
His soul enlivens and becalms his fears, † 55

Removes

---

\* As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,  
O'er Heav'n's clear azure spreads her sacred light,

. . . . .  
. . . . .

Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole ;

. . . . .  
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the light,  
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

*Pope's Homer.*

† Ephesians ii. 8. 1 Peter i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. John  
xi. 25, 26.

As

Removes his doubts, and teaches him to sing,  
Where's, grave, thy victory? and where, death,  
thy sting?

While full of hopes he hears the welcome call,  
And thro' his Saviour triumphs over all. \*

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THE

As the moon receives its light from the sun, and will  
be of no service to us after death; so faith receives  
strength and vigour from the Sun of Righteousness, and  
at death will be turn'd into vision.

'Tis faith disarms destruction.

*Young.*

See Hervey on the Tombs, page 87, 88.

\* 1 Corinthians xv. 55, 6, 7.

*The dying Christian's farewell.*

Farewell my dearest friends, I must away,  
Death calls me hence, I can no longer stay;  
Farewell my transient comforts here below,  
Christ bids me welcome, to his Heav'n I go;  
Farewell my sorrows, and adieu my grief,  
To every trouble, death's a kind relief;  
Farewell my fading joys, I go to prove  
The endless pleasures of the saints above;  
Farewell my pains, be gone my rising fears,  
In Heav'n there's neither sorrow, grief, nor tears;  
All earthly happiness I now resign,  
Vain world farewell, but welcome joys divine.

To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians i. 21.

THE nat'ral man, by sin in darknes bound, 60  
 Does not receive the gospel's joyful sound,  
 Withh eart-felt pleasure and with true delight,  
 Till (as the moon arising chears the night) }  
 Faith gives of Jesus an enlivening sight ; }  
 Then every promise in the Scriptures sown, 65  
 He (by appropriation) makes his own,  
 And thro' the Spirit's teachings, mounts on high,  
 Trusts in the Lord, and learns to live and die. \*

THIS life's a dream with all its tranfient joys ; †  
 Like airy bubbles blown by wanton boys, 70  
 Whose various colours please their gazing eyes,  
 But burft and vanifh ere they're taught to rife ;  
 Thus all our fleeting comforts here below,  
 Which earth can give or heav'n itfelf beftow,  
 Are but of fhort duration, quickly fade, 75  
 By ficknefs blafed, or by grief decay'd ;  
 By sorrows wither'd, or by death destroy'd,  
 They're gone forever ere they're well enjoy'd.

Hence

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\* John vi. 63. Romans viii. 1, 5, 13, 14.

† James iv. 14. Job vii. 1, 6, 16. chap. viii. 9.  
 Pfalm xc. 5, 6, 10. Pfalm cii. 11. ciii. 15.

Hence learn to fix your thoughts on things above,  
 Make not the world the object of your love, \* 80  
 But dwell on joys immortal and divine, †  
 And may those joys eternally be thine !  
 Of the best blessings men enjoy on earth,  
 They by their loss, are often taught their worth ;  
 Thus in affliction, health is chiefly priz'd, 85  
 The dead esteem'd, who living were despis'd ;  
 And time, *most precious* time, recall'd in vain, ‡  
 While godliness (too late) is counted gain.

DELUDED mortals, flee the baits of sense,  
 Pursue not pleasures at your soul's expence ; 90  
 Think

---

\* 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17. † Colossians iii. 2, 3.  
 Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,  
 Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.

*Young.*

‡ . . . . . Moments seize,  
 Heav'n's on their wing ; a moment we may wish,  
 When worlds want wealth to buy ; bid day stand still,  
 Bid him drive back his car, recal, retake  
 Fate's hasty prey ; implore him, reimport  
 The period past, regive the given hour.

*Night Thoughts.*

Lorenzo ! O for yesterdays to come. *Night II.*

Think on the shortness of the present state,  
 Prepare in time to meet approaching fate,  
 For, Oh ! the dangerous folly to be wise too  
                     late. \*

Hear for thy comfort, poor believing soul,  
 O'er whom the waves of whelming sorrow roll ; 95  
 Th' Almighty He ! who made this ample sky,  
 With all these num'rous pendant worlds on high ;  
 Is thy protector, and eternal friend ;  
 On whom thou may'st in every grief depend,  
 Who has declar'd thou shalt receive no ill, 100  
 Without his knowledge or against his will,  
 And when afflictions shall his saints befall,  
 Has promis'd graciously to hear their call. †  
 O then, thrice happy soul, assuage thy grief,  
 He will at all times be thy sure relief ; 105  
 Thy God's thy Glory who preserves thy ways,  
 Strive thou to *live* as well as *speak* his praise.

Still

---

\* The *thought* of death alone, the *fear* destroys ;  
 A disaffection to that precious thought  
 Is more than midnight darknefs on the soul,  
 Which sleeps beneath it, on a precipice,  
 Puff'd off by the first blast, and lost *forever*.

Young, *Night V.*

† 1 Corinthians x. 13. Matthew x. 30. Psalm  
 xxxiv. 19.

Still for thy further consolation know,  
 The Lord, for *wisest* ends, appoints thee woe ;  
 To wean thee from the world, thy patience  
 prove, \* 110

To show thy sonship and a father's love. †  
 Does life, with all our frail enjoyments here,  
 But as a shadow or a dream appear ?  
 Is day far spent, and is the night at hand  
 Which neither youth nor riches can withstand ? 115  
 (That awful night of death, which sets us free,  
 When mortal puts on immortality. ‡  
 That dernier sleep which ends our joys below,  
 From which we wake to happiness or woe  
 That knows no end ?) Then strive without  
 delay, 120

To gain eternal life ; work while 'tis day, §  
 Now

---

\* 1 Hebrews xii. 5, 6, 7, and 8th verses, together  
 with the 11th. Revelations iii. 19. 2 Corinthians  
 iv. 17. 1 Peter i. 4, 7, 8, 9. Job v. 17, 19.

† Proverbs iii. 11, 12.

Good when he gives, supremely good,

Nor less when he denies,

E'en crosses from his sov'reign hand,

Are blessings in disguise.

*Hervey.*

‡ 1 Corinthians xv. 53. Job xxx. 23.

§ John ix. 4.

Now is th' accepted time, receive the grace  
 In Scripture offer'd to a guilty race ; \*  
 Do what thou hast to do with all thy might,  
 Lest this thy day should close in endless night, † 125  
 Seek true repentance and religion prize,  
 In youth, in manhood, and in age be wise. ‡  
 Does one dread night of sure unerring fate,  
 The young, the old, the rich, the poor await ? §  
 (When we must sleep a sleep ne'er slept  
                   before, 130  
 While fancy shall distress nor please us more ; ||  
 But all our visionary dreams be o'er :)  
 Then hear, ye youths, unthinking, vain, and gay,  
 " Who drink the spirit of the golden day,"  
 Ye pleasure's vot'ries, and ye slaves of sense, 135  
 By sin no longer dare Omnipotence ;

Think

---

\* 2 Corinthians vi. 2.   Isaiah xlix. 8.

† Ecclesiastes ix. 10.

‡ Romans xvi. 19.   Ephesians v. 15, 16.   Colossians iv. 5.   Proverbs iii. 13, to the 17th verse.

Religion's all ; descending from the skies  
 To wretched man ; the goddess in her left  
 Holds out *this* world, and in her right the *next*.

Young.

§ Numbers xvi. 29.

|| This alludes to pleasing or frightful dreams.

Think how uncertain's life, and death how sure,  
 Take heed of *little* sins, that fatal lure,  
 And know they're *nearest* danger, who are *most*  
*secure.* \*

SURE as day ends in night, night ends in  
 day, 140

While morn arising drives the shades away;  
 Let not the christian under grief despair,  
 But every pain with resignation bear;  
 For thro' afflictions true believers rise,  
 To endless happiness beyond the skies; † 145  
 Thus as the darkness ends it leads to light,  
 The finest day succeeds the blackest night,  
 Then, O thou troubled soul, complain no more,  
 But what thou can'st not understand adore. ‡

G

Is

\* Most secure in their *own* opinions; for the danger of temptations overcoming the soul, arises from an inward (tho' false) persuasion of our *own* ability to withstand them.

† 2 Corinthians iv. 17. Acts xiv. 22. Comfort and consolation can never be too often suggested to a troubled and desponding soul. Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, 3. chap. xl. 1.

‡ The ways of Providence are dark and intricate,  
 Our understanding searches them in vain.

Addison.

Is pain thy lot, presume not to repine, 150  
 To God thy soul and all concerns resign,  
 For thou art his, and he is ever thine. \*

BUT hark ! methinks I hear the bell strike one,  
 The sound proclaims, another day's begun ; †  
 Time swiftly flies, improve the moments lent, 155  
 Prepare for death and husband each event ;  
 Think not to trifle with the Lord Most High,  
 Believe and practise, or thou sure must die ; ‡  
 Take heed of sleeping on enchanted ground,  
 Dream not of happiness where ills abound ; 160  
 But know, tho' man to fancy *here's* a slave,  
 'Tis all reality beyond the grave. §

Are

---

\* John xv. 16. 1 Cor. i. 27. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.  
 Jeremiah xxxi. 33. chap. xxx. 22. Psalm lxxiii. 25.

† The bell strikes one ; we take no note of time  
 But as it flies ; to give it then a tongue  
 Is wise in man.

*Young.*

‡ John viii. 24. Revelations xxii. 14. James i. 22.

§ Ecclesiastes xi. 3. Habakkuk ii. 3.

All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond  
 Is substance ; the reverse is folly's creed :  
 How solid all, where change shall be no more !

*Young.*

Are light and darkness necessary here,  
 (Does night as useful as the day appear)  
 So are afflictions, sickness, pain, and woe, 165  
 As health and pleasure while we dwell below.  
 Then cease to murmur, poor benighted soul,  
 O'er whom afflictions on afflictions roll ;  
 Trust in the Lord, make him alone your stay,  
 He'll give thee strength according to thy day ;\*  
 Thy sure support and best physician prove,  
 First sanctify afflictions then remove, }  
 And land thee safe at last in realms above. †

HENCE learn what blessings on the Christian  
 wait,  
 Both in the present and a future state ; † 175  
 The Lord's his God, his Guardian, Guide, and  
 Friend,  
 Mercy and goodness on his steps attend ;  
 Eternal love his sun and shield appears,  
 In every danger to dispel his fears ;

G 2

His

---

\* Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25. † John xvii. 24. chap.  
 xiv. 2, 3. † Proverbs xi. 31. chap. xii. 21, 28.

His beacon § prove thro' life's tempestuous sea, 180  
And blissful portion in eternity. \*

Do pleasures from religion flow,  
Which only *true believers* know ?  
Then let us all with one accord  
Seek, honor, love, and fear the Lord. 185

---

§ A beacon is a light, placed on an eminence to prevent shipwrecks.

\* Luke xxi. 28. Isaiah lx. 19, 20. ↵ Romans viii. 28. Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

A

SOLEMN ADDRESS

TO THE

EVER-PRESENT DEITY.

**F**ATHER of Nature, Lord of heav'n and  
earth !

Who gave at first to every system birth,  
By whose prolific word, all things were made,  
Who ever reigns on high, with light array'd, }  
To Thee be endless adoration paid. 5

“ O THOU great Arbiter of life and death,”  
Clouds are thy chariot, and the wind thy breath,  
In every thunder-clap thy voice we hear,  
In every lightning's flash behold thy spear;  
The sun derives its vital heat from *Thee*, 10  
And bears resemblance to thy majesty ;  
The moon and stars, by thy benign command,  
Softens the shades when night o'erspreads the land,

G 3

The

The earth's thy footstool and the heav'n's thy  
throne,

All creatures *Thee*, their great Creator own ; 15

From *Thee* alone, existence Man receives,

By *Thee* created, and on *Thee* he lives ;

To *Thee* alone our highest praise we owe,

For all our blessings from *thy* bounty flow ;

The herds and flocks to *Thee* their voices raise, 20

They low thy goodness and they bleat thy praise ;

Trees, herbs, and flow'rs thy works aloud pro-

claim,

And birds melodious, warble forth thy name ;

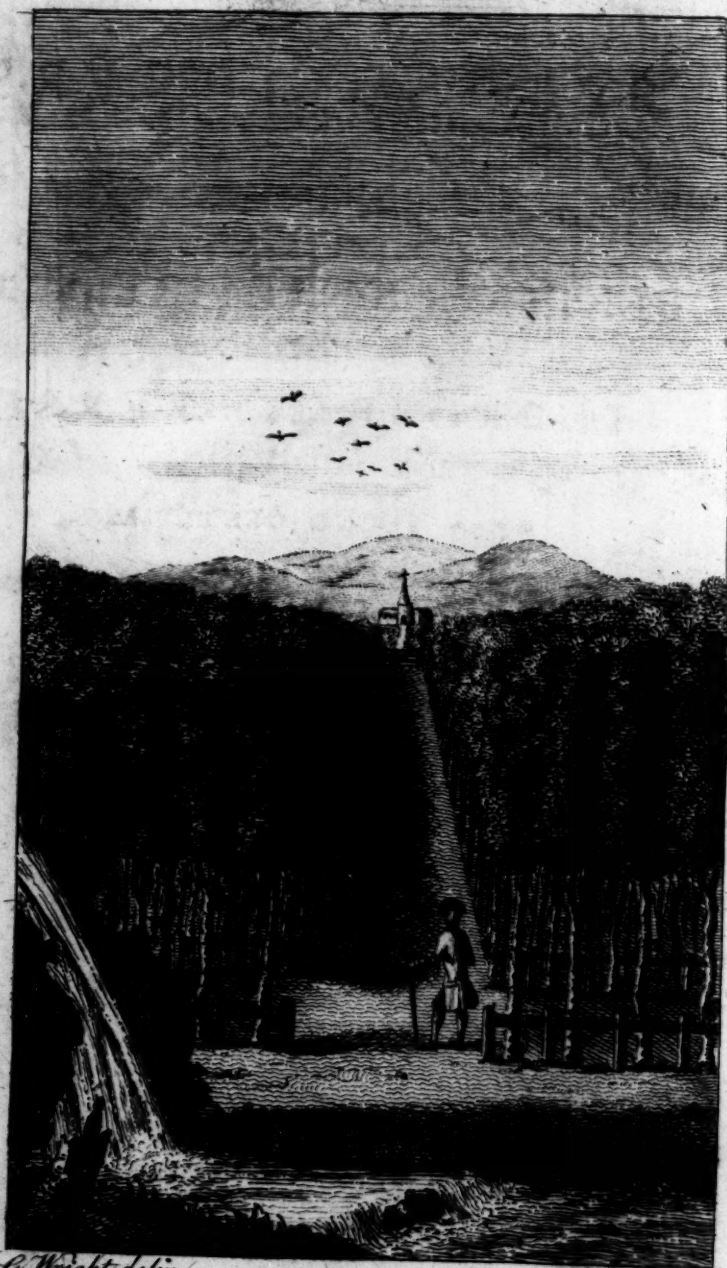
Snow, hail, and rain, obey thine awful nod,

While all Creation echoes, THOU ART GOD \*.

---

\* *Vide* Thomson's Hymn.





*G. Wright delin*  
*Welcome ye Shades, Ye bowery thickets hail.*  
*J. Hiltchin sculp*  
*Thompson*

SYLVAN LETTERS;  
OR, THE  
BENEFITS OF RETIREMENT:  
IN PROSE AND VERSE.

BY A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

Optimum vivere ad naturam.

*Cato.*

Ye woods and wilds receive me to your shade,  
These still retreats my contemplation aid;  
Ye groves and flow'ry vales in you we find  
The first unblemish'd joys for Man design'd.  
Nature does here, her virgin smiles afford,  
And shews us Paradise again restor'd.  
Our souls their former harmony acquire,  
And vexing Care and conscious Guilt retire.

*Mrs. Rowe.*

SYLVAN LETTERS

OF THE  
REV. J. C. COLEMAN, AND W. E. B. DUBOIS  
CONTAINING THE ONLY AND COMPLETE HISTORY OF  
THE MOVEMENT FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF  
THE NEGRO IN THE UNITED STATES  
FROM 1776 TO 1863  
WITH A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO IN AMERICA  
FROM 1776 TO 1863  
BY J. C. COLEMAN AND W. E. B. DUBOIS  
NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY THE  
AUTHORS, 15 N. 2ND ST. N. Y.  
1863



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## To the R E A D E R.

**R**URAL Solitude is always chosen and preferred by the contemplative Man, before all the deluding scenes of pleasure and festivity; however the gay, unthinking, and polite are charmed with the futile amusements of the town, the mimicry of the theatres, or splendors of a ball. Those who delight in the calmness of reflection and serenity of thought, seek the peaceful abodes of the country, and are pleased with the tranquillity of a Sylvan Retreat, according to the opinion of a celebrated Author\*, which I beg leave to insert in his own words in defence of my above assertions.

“ THE love of retirement has in all ages  
 “ adhered very closely to those minds, which  
 “ have been most enlarged by knowledge, or  
 “ elevated by genius.

“ THOSE

---

\* Rambler, No. 7.

\* THOSE who have enjoyed every thing that  
 " is generally supposed to confer happiness,  
 " have been forced to seek it in the shades of  
 " privacy. Though they have possessed both  
 " power and riches in abundance, and been  
 " therefore surrounded by men, who considered  
 " it as their chief interest to remove from  
 " them every thing that might offend their  
 " ease, ruffle their tranquillity, or interrupt  
 " their pleasures ; they have soon felt the  
 " languors of satiety, and found themselves un-  
 " able to pursue the race of life, except with fre-  
 " quent respirations of intermediate solitude."

THE following letters exemplify the happi-  
 ness of a country life, and contain matter for  
 serious enquiry, as well as sentiments of ever-  
 lasting moment and importance. May they be  
 read with candour and received with attention ;  
 their foibles overlooked with the condescension  
 of good-nature, and in the hands of an Almighty  
 God, prove the eternal benefit and advantage  
 of every Reader, is the ardent prayer of

Baldwin's Gardens,

The AUTHOR.

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SYLVAN LETTERS;  
OR, THE  
BENEFITS OF RETIREMENT.

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LETTER I.

*From a young lady in the country to a relation in town, describing the situation of her retreat, and her rural employments.*

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

AFTER a (three days) very agreeable journey, I am arrived at D—— seat; and according to promise, have taken the first opportunity of informing you how I got down, and my opinion of the situation. With respect to what I met with on the road, it would not afford variety enough to be entertaining; only this I must say, the pleasant towns we past through, with the extensive prospects on every side, and fine weather, all contributed to make travelling delightful, by taking off from the fatigue which naturally attends rising early, riding all day, and going to bed late at night.

THE

THE house is elegant beyond description, about four miles from the high road, near a small village, and surrounded with woods, groves, and fertile vallies; just such a retreat as I have long wish'd for, as a welcome asylum from the noise and hurry of a gay and fashionable life. Here no balls or assemblies, plays or masquerades, divert my attention, or invite me to kill time; but the warbling songsters of the grove daily present me with the native harmony of an aerial concert, and praise the Author of universal Nature in melodious songs.

I DOUBT not but you may envy my situation, especially as I know you love retirement; and give me leave to say, in the sincerity of disinterested friendship, without the least flattery, nothing, my dear Sophe, but your agreeable company and conversation could add to my present happiness; the loss of which, I hope you will in some measure make up by your entertaining letters; the longer they are the more acceptable, the oftner the more welcome; and be assured in return, some of my pleasantest moments will be answering your's.

THE whole family I am with lay themselves out to please me; Miss B——, the doctor's daughter, a sensible good-natur'd young lady about twenty-two, seems particularly fond of me; we sleep together by choice; often walk  
out

but together, and in short, are like two sisters ; where you see one you are almost sure to find the other ; she is fond of solitude, has been educated in a religious manner, and early taught to pay a suitable respect and reverence to the doctrines of the gospel. The family is kept in great order, and called together every morning and evening to join in the sacred acts of devotion ; the doctor himself is the chaplain, and appears every way suited for the solemn work. After breakfast Miss B. and I retire into our chamber to dress ourselves for the day, then sit down to work, and by turns read to each other ; about 12 o'clock we commonly take a walk together in the garden (a sweet place indeed) but this I will give you a description of in my next ; after dinner the doctor goes to his study and smokes his pipe, or resigns himself to sleep, while Miss B. and I take a turn or two down a fine gravel walk, shaded with lofty elm trees by the side of the garden, or sit awhile in a beautiful arbor at the bottom of it, then return into the parlour which looks over the road, and presents me with a charming prospect of the distant country ; here Miss B. has her harpsichord, which she plays on delightfully, and knowing I am fond of sacred music, often favours me with a song out of Handel's Messiah, or a favourite anthem ; this employs us till tea ; afterwards, if not too cool, we listen

to the evening songs of the nightingale from a grove near the walk I described above, whose pleasing notes are far more grateful to my ears than the finest airs of an Italian opera: as night advances we are forc'd to leave the pretty creature lulling itself to sleep with her own agreeable sounds, lest the dew should injure us with its increasing moisture. But I beg pardon for detaining you so long: pray let me hear from you as soon as possible, and believe me to be,

Dear Sophia,

July 10, 1766.

Your's unalterably.



## LETTER II.

To the same. *Describing a repository or burial place, built in a grove near the garden, with a description of the latter.*

DEAR SOPHIA,

YOUR kind letter found me at tea yesterday afternoon with the doctor, his daughter, and Mrs. L——, a maiden lady about forty, a relation of theirs, who I forgot to mention in the hurry of my first epistle; she is a very chearful woman, but rather fond of a domestic life, and very politely shares the care of the family with Miss B. Her good sense, affability, and

and discretion; are every day more visible, in her prudent conduct and entertaining conversation. After tea was over, Miss B. told me, if it was agreeable, she would show me what they called the Repository; I readily consented, and she took me down the walk I described in my last, into the grove which is at the bottom of it, whose numerous trees, planted in rows, form several pretty walks, while the pleasing gloom adds a verdant solemnity to the whole: near the end, surrounded with lofty spreading elms, is the repository, which appears to be an imitation of one of the sepulchres of the antients, or Ægyptian burying places, it being built for the reception of the dead. We enter by an old-fashioned door, which seems as if it had been made two or three hundred years ago; opposite to the entrance, and about two yards from the door, a long curtain draws back and discovers several niches for coffins in an horizontal position one over another, three of which are filled up with the gentleman who built the house, his wife, and daughter; on each side are lamps, which are to be supposed perpetually burning: at the top of the building, which is square, are two grates made of wire to let in the fresh air: the ground is left unpav'd, in case any one should die of the small-pox, or some other infectious distemper, to receive such bodies to prevent them

infecting the place; death's heads, hour glasses, and several such like emblems are painted on the walls; over the door appear in large characters, those remarkable words of the apostle Paul, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." In one corner is written, "Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula \*;" near this, under the representation of a scull, with a crown on it, is seen that momentous, but just observation of Horace, "Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas, regumque turres †."

THE silence and dreariness of the whole, strike a religious awe upon the mind, and drive away all the gay images of an ensnaring world; whilst the exanimate contents in their narrow cells, point to that passage in the Psalms, *Lord, teach me the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.*

AFTER staying here some time, viewing the building, and conversing together on the momentous subjects it inculcates, we returned up the grove in to the garden. The entrance to this is through an iron gate of curious workmanship; a  
broad

---

\* Death only proves what little things men are.

† Death equally treads down the beggar's cottage and the monarch's palace.

broad gravel walk spreads itself through the middle, at the extremity of which is built a pretty neat arbour, surrounded with jessamines and honey-suckles, whose mellifluous odours are far more refreshing and agreeable than the so much admir'd perfumes of musk, civet, or bergamot. Here Miss B. and I often repair to converse on the beauties of creation or the happiness of a country life; here, when she is unavoidably engaged in family affairs, I retire alone to enjoy the pleasures of reading and meditation, or spend some of my happiest moments in writing to my dear Sophia; an employment I always begin with delight, and leave with the greatest reluctance. By the side of the arbour another walk is made which leads to a beautiful summer-house, built on an eminence near a delightful and extensive meadow, where lambs, white as the driven snow, and harmless as the cooing dove, bleat responsive through the pleasing verdure. But I must break off here, lest I entirely exhaust your patience; and remain, dear Sophia,

Your's, &c.

## LETTER III.

To the same. *With a description of Noon, and a conversation that past between Miss B. and her, on the receipt and perusal of the last epistle she receiv'd from her.*

DEAR SOPHIA,

**Y**OUR last the footman brought me as I was sitting under the shadow of a spreading oak tree, angling in a beautiful canal near the bottom of the garden. Miss B. was reading to me out of Thomson's excellent poem on the Summer, where, describing a happy pair, he says,

. . . . . Devoting all  
To love, each was to each a dearer self;  
Supremely happy in th' awaken'd power  
Of giving joy. Alone amid the shades,  
Still in harmonious intercourse they liv'd  
The rural day, and talk'd the flowing heart,  
Or sigh'd and lookt unutterable things.

The sun was shining in its meridian splendour, the herds and flocks in the neighbouring meadows were reclin'd under the verdant screen of trees and hedges, to shun the noon-day heat, and sleep away the sultry hours, fann'd by the gentle breezes that blew across the fields reviving coolness; the busy bees were extracting delicious sweets from every flower; the industrious ants, with indefatigable labour, were dragging their  
several

several burdens (of provisions for the community, or materials for repairing their habitations, injur'd by the heedless wandering traveller, or unavoidable accidents to which they are daily expos'd) to their distant homes. Welcome was the refreshing shade and chearing zephyrs, but far more welcome to me was my dear Sophia's kind and agreeable letter, which contained such a pleasing description of the happiness of early devoting ourselves to God, and the benefits of a religious life, contrasted with the miseries of the ungodly in a future state, which not only witness the piety of the writer, but the feelings of a generous, grateful, and elevated mind, impressed with the reality of the truths related, and earnestly desirous of the eternal welfare of your friend; after reading it over with great satisfaction and delight, I gave it to Miss B. assured there was nothing in it but what agreed entirely with *her* notions of religion, and experience of divine truths, which she has often told me of in her discourses with me on the sublime enjoyments of the real Believer in both worlds.

WHEN she had finished it, and observed the propriety and justice of your sentiments, we began conversing together on the subjects you had discuss'd in such a judicious and lively manner. Indeed, says Miss B. early piety recommended by a religious example and education, and at-

tended with the divine blessing, is productive of unspeakable comfort, satisfaction, and joy; a joy which the apostle Paul styles full of glory, and our justly admir'd poet (Pope) beautifully describes in the following lines,

Which nothing earthly gives nor can destroy,  
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy;

What inexpressible pleasure must it give a fond indulgent parent, to see his child endeavouring to follow his steps in the paths of virtue and religion; on the other hand, how thankful should the children of such parents be, not only for their solicitous concern for their temporal and eternal interests, but for the continuance of such valuable lives, while many are taken off in their prime, and forced to leave their young unhappy offspring to a world of temptations, calamities, and distress. As she spoke the last, I observed a pitying tear trickle down her tender cheek, at the thoughts of the numerous difficulties to which the helpless orphans are expos'd; for her humanity is as great as her will is good to help and relieve the wretched and unfortunate. I was just going to make an answer to what she had said, when the servant brought us word that dinner was ready; upon which we left our agreeable situation, and returned up the garden into the house, where we found the doctor and Mrs. L—— interrogating the footman, whether  
he

he had found us, and where; having lost us ever since 12 o'clock. But I will not detain you longer at present: forgive the length of this; I know you will; therefore, without any other apology, remain your's, &c. &c.



#### LETTER IV.

*From a minister in the country to a lady in town, giving an account of the death of her daughter, with the melancholy circumstances that attended it.*

MADAM,

THE contents of this epistle, I doubt not, will greatly surprize you, but not more so than the accident which occasions it did me and my whole family; your daughter, whom you was so obliging as to intrust under my wife's care, is now, I hope, in glory. You are startled and wonder what I mean; you may well be surpriz'd indeed, but not to keep you longer in suspense, I must acquaint you, though with the greatest reluctance and concern, she died this morning; you know she was in a decline when she left London, which is not only one of the most flattering but fatal disorders which the body is subject to, for they often think themselves well

well one minute and are dying the next, so it was with Miss M. your daughter : we thought at breakfast she seemed pretty chearful, and eat as much as she had done of a morning since she came down. About 11 o'clock, as she and my eldest daughter were walking together in the garden, she complained of a violent pain in her stomach, and before any assistance could be had, fainted away and died in a few minutes after ; the shock which it gave my daughter, has thrown her into violent fits, and what will be the issue of them God only knows. With respect to my wife and myself, we sincerely participate with you in the grief and concern you must experience for the loss of so valuable and dutiful a child ; the whole house is in the utmost confusion, what with the surprize at so sudden a death, and the fears of the dreadful consequences respecting my poor girl. I can hardly tell what I write ; I hope you will pardon the abruptness and inaccuracies you *must* discover in this epistle, being written with a trembling hand, an aching heart, and weeping eyes ; I need not tell you what I feel while I am inditing these few lines, nor how much pain I know they must give you in the reading of them ; suffice it to say as a parent, my fears and anxiety of mind for the recovery of my daughter is no less distressing than the sorrow and concern you feel for the loss of  
of

of your's: it would be quite superfluous to add, how necessary your presence will be at our house as soon as possible.

I am, madam,  
with all due respect,  
Your's to command.



## LETTER V.

*From the minister's daughter after her recovery, to a young lady in town, with some more particulars concerning the character and behaviour of the late Miss M. concluding with a few remarks on the necessity of being always in readiness for the approaching change.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM just recovered from a dangerous fever, occasioned by the sudden death of Miss M. (the pretty, sensible, and good-natured young lady, I told you of in my last) I was not expected to live for a week, my father and mother were in the greatest trouble imaginable, not only for me, but the melancholy accident that brought on my illness; through mercy I have got the better of it, and take this first opportunity (though I am very weak still) of writing to my dear

dear Berinda, to acquaint her with the particulars of the mournful story which I know you are desirous to be informed of. Miss M. had been with us three weeks, and showing a particular esteem for me, I promised myself great pleasure in her company and conversation; she was fond of walking, and would often ask me to accompany her, which I readily comply'd with, being willing to oblige her as far as lay in my power; indeed she was so good tempered, affable, and complaisant, that every one in the family did all they could to make her situation agreeable, and I may truly say, we are all sincere mourners for her. How pleasing it is to be so much beloved by others; what a strong motive this is to set us on endeavouring to make ourselves lovely! She was very open and free in discoursing with me, and made me the confidant of her inmost secrets; on the morning on which she died, as we were walking together in the garden, she address me in words to the following effect; " My dear  
 " Miss F——, the many civilities and respect  
 " I have received from you and your worthy  
 " family, call for my most grateful acknowledgments; I wish it was in my power to  
 " make a suitable return, but that it is not, nor  
 " will not be, for I find the disorder, on which  
 " account I came into the country, increasing  
 " on me daily; however, at times I appear  
 " much

“ much better, it is only the nature of the  
 “ complaint so to do ; I know it will soon put  
 “ an end to a life, which would be but a  
 “ burthen if prolonged ; yet I cannot leave the  
 “ world without telling the real cause of this  
 “ fatal complaint I have laboured under for these  
 “ three months past \*. About two years ago,  
 “ a young fellow who visited a near relation of  
 “ mine, happening to see me there one evening,  
 “ fell in love with me, as he was pleased to say,  
 “ which in the end proved only a pretence to  
 “ ruin and abandon me ; he was a very likely  
 “ young man, and well instructed in the cruel  
 “ and diabolical arts of deceit and treachery.  
 “ By his easy and polite address, he gained too  
 “ great an ascendancy over my affections, and  
 “ soon afterwards I found he had all my heart ;  
 “ his genteel behaviour and deportment deceived  
 “ my dear and tender mother into an esteem  
 “ for him ; and the particular notice he took of  
 “ me, together with his assiduous endeavours to  
 “ ingratiate himself into my favour, made me  
 “ think much better of him than I have since  
 “ found (to my unspeakable sorrow and con-  
 “ fusion)

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\* This was a real fact, and plainly shows how very  
 cautious young women should be in fixing their affec-  
 tions too hastily, or believing every man who flatters  
 them, only to deceive, ruin, and then laugh at them  
 and boast of it.

" fusion) he deserved. It is very hard to know  
 " who are sincere, I'm sure I have sufficient  
 " reason to say so; for he continued his ad-  
 " dresses with the greatest appearance of a *real*  
 " love, till the day was appointed for our mar-  
 " riage; when hearing accidentally of a young  
 " lady with a greater fortune than mine, he  
 " soon found her out, and in about three months  
 " after married her; which news being brought  
 " to me, fell upon my spirits and threw me into  
 " this decline, which, I hope, I have thus far  
 " bore with a becoming fortitude and resigna-  
 " tion, and now find too much to suffer many  
 " days longer. I forgive him who is the cause  
 " of my grief, from the bottom of my heart,  
 " but I blame myself for my too easy credulity  
 " and belief; that men are base, designing, and  
 " inconsistent, I am certain of, then why did I  
 " listen and believe the false and cruel Sophron?  
 " I stand self-condemned; yet who, among wo-  
 " men, can steel their hearts against the soft and  
 " pleasing sensations of a tender, generous passion,  
 " encouraged by the addresses of a man, who  
 " seems by nature formed to felicitate the fair?  
 " But I have done; may you, my dear, never  
 " experience the anguish of a slighted love; I  
 " have paid dear for it, very dear indeed." Here  
 she burst into a flood of tears, and taking  
 hold of my hand, prest it with all the ardour  
 of

of a genuine friendship, and with many sighs and much difficulty, begged me to conceal the real cause of her illness, till after her disease, as she never had divulged it to any one but me. We had not walked above five minutes after she mentioned this last request, when she complained of a violent pain in her breast, so very great as to stop her breath; and before I could make any one hear me (for we were near the bottom of our garden) she fainted away in my arms, and after fetching one or two deep sighs expired, leaving me in a situation inexpressibly affecting, and near desperation. My mother and sister thinking we had been walking longer than usual came to seek for us, and happening to turn down the walk we were in, found me as I have described, and getting assistance had us *both* conveyed into the house, for I went into fits as soon as they came up to me. I have been particular in the account, and far exceeded the bounds of a letter I own; but as it was your desire to hear the whole of the circumstances, I hope you will forgive me. I shall only add, how absolutely necessary it is to be always ready to meet the last enemy; she, poor girl, I trust was so, though I believe she did not think it was so near as it proved. In a few days, hours, or minutes more, and *we* may be numbered among the dead; who can tell which of us shall be the *next*? then let

us strive earnestly to be interested in Him, who hath declared, "whosoever believeth in him, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die *eternally*."

At present I remain

Your's sincerely.



## LETTER VI.

*From Miss F——, the minister's daughter, to the same young lady, with an epitaph on Miss M. made by a gentleman who well knew her living, and now sincerely mourns her loss; concluding with reflections on the vanity of all earthly enjoyments without health.*

MY DEAR BERINDA,

I FORGOT to tell you in my last, that Mr. Maynard seeing Miss M. at our house the third day after she came down, was greatly smitten both with her person and conversation; for really she had a very fair skin, a modest innocent countenance, and a great deal of good sense, accompanied with a sweetness of temper, that could not fail of being pleasing and agreeable to every one she conversed with. He was very inquisitive to know who she was, and after being told

told by my father, what an amiable character she bore, and having reason to believe the truth of it from what little he had seen of her, he wanted sadly to be introduced to her as an humble servant; but this my father would by no means allow of, without he first went and gained her mother's consent, by a letter directed to him with permission so to do; accordingly being told where Mrs. M. lived in town, he set off the Monday following, with full purpose to ask her whether she would permit him to pay his addresses to her daughter. Unfortunately for him he was thrown from his horse, before he had got four miles from his house, and received a dangerous contusion in his head, upon which he was obliged to be conveyed with the utmost care imaginable to the next cottage, where a surgeon from our town being sent for, who knew him very well, dressed his wound and ordered him not to be moved till he should come again. In short, he continued extremely bad till the day before Miss M. died, when finding himself on the mending hand (though very slowly) and being just able to sit up for the first time since the accident, he began to be in hopes of once more pursuing his intended journey; but oh! how great was his surprize and concern, when the day following he heard that Miss M. was dead; words are too faint to describe his grief and sorrow on receiving the

I                      melancholy

melancholy news. After being told how sudden it happened, and the conversation that past between her and me, he fetched a deep sigh, and said, while the tears flowed down his pallid cheeks in great abundance, "The dear creature was *too* good to live in this world; she's gone to glory, I doubt not, where I hope soon to follow her." Here he made a long pause, being very weak and low, and was often observed to lift his eyes to heaven, as if in some ejaculatory prayer. After gaining a little more strength, he begged his sister (who was with him most of the time of his illness, and gave me this account of it) to get pen, ink, and paper, and write down the following character of her, which, he said, he was certain she deserved.

Her religion was of the heart,  
 Her devotion warm, yet reasonable,  
 Free from superstition and ostentation;  
 She was steadily virtuous, not formal nor censorious;  
 Strictly prudent, yet easy and affable,  
 She was benevolent without weakness,  
 Cheerful without levity,  
 Ingenious without affectation,  
 And beautiful without vanity;  
 Formed for all the tenderness of friendship,  
 Most obliging and most sincere,  
 But cautious in her choice;  
 She adorn'd the dignity of virtue,  
 By the grace of humility and good nature;

She liv'd above the world without pretending to  
despise it;

Sustain'd the afflictions of life, with the patience of a  
primitive Christian,

And died with that tranquillity and resignation,

Which becomes one, whose hopes are full of

#### IMMORTALITY.

AFTER this was done, he seemed inclined to sleep, being much fatigued, and continued very ill for a month afterwards, and was thought by the physician in great danger, but is since so much recovered as to walk about his house, though not able to go out yet, and it is to be feared never will without somebody with him, appearing to be going into a deep melancholy, his spirits at times being much affected. What avails now his having the grèatest abundance of the good things of this life, his elegant house, furniture, and servants, his beautiful garden, summer-houses, fish-ponds, and arbours; for he cannot enjoy them: he is really much to be pitied, and is a striking instance of the vanity and nothingness of all sub-lunary pleasures and emoluments, without the divine blessing and health to partake of them. Oh! my dear Berinda, we cannot be thankful enough for this best of earthly blessings, health; which, like most of our enjoyments, none know the true value of, till they have felt it's loss: but

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I must

I must not be too prolix, lest your patience should be quite exhausted. I remain,

Dear Berinda,

Your's unalterably.



## LETTER VII.

To the same. *Giving an account of Mrs. M.'s arrival at the minister's house, and her behaviour on seeing her daughter, with a description of Miss M.'s funeral, and the improvement that should be made of such alarming Providences.*

DEAR BERINDA,

**Y**OUR reflections on the unhappy and affecting situation of Mr. Maynard, are very just, and entirely consonant to those sentiments of piety towards God, and charity to men (which intends universal benevolence or philanthropy) which our pious and honoured parents have so early and earnestly endeavoured to inculcate in our tender minds; may they always direct our thoughts, influence our desires, and be the rule of our actions.

You beg to know how Mrs. M. the deceased young lady's mother, behaved on seeing her: very moving indeed; she got to our house the second day

day after her daughter's death, and as soon as she saw my mother (without being able to say a word for some time, overcome with grief) she burst into a flood of tears; my mother could hardly refrain, and my sister, who was in the room, actually did weep with her. After she had given vent to the first emotions of sorrow, she desired to see her dear child; accordingly, my mother and sister accompanied her to the room where she lay. As soon as the door was opened, she went up to the coffin, and looking into it, cried out, with great vehemence, " Ah ! that's my dearest child, indeed, my once dutiful and much loved daughter, lovely even in death, who was the only support and comfort of my life : " here she again gave way to excessive grief, and was just going to faint, when my mother took a bottle of drops out of her pocket, and applying it to her nose and sprinkling her face with some cold water, brought her to herself again; when looking at my mother, she said, with great difficulty, " Oh, madam, you know not the pain and anguish of a fond mother, on the death of an only child, whose dutiful and affectionate behaviour endeared her to all her acquaintance, but especially to her loving and indulgent parent." She would have proceeded, but the overflowings of heartfelt sorrow stopt her utterance; my mother, seeing it affected her so deeply, prevailed with her,

after many intreaties, to leave the room, but not before she had taken another farewell look of the dear deceased.

THE Tuesday following Miss M. was buried, according to her own desire, in the same vault with her uncle who lies in our church, about 7 o'clock in the evening. As (you know) we are not far from the church, it was a walking funeral. The corps was carried first, as usual, the mutes and feathers going before it; the pall was supported by six young ladies in white; three came from London on purpose, and the others were Miss L, Miss W, and my sister; each of them were handed along by a young gentleman in white, all acquaintances of the deceased; then followed the afflicted Mrs. M. with her brother, who lives in our town; after them my father and mother; then four couple more, relations and friends of Mrs. M. whom you know nothing of, accompanied with many promiscuous persons of both sexes, young and old, whom the sight had drawn together, but hardly a dry eye amongst them.

THE Sunday following, by Mrs. M.'s desire, my father preached a sermon from these words, 1 Cor. xv. 49. *And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* In the course of the sermon, when he gave the character of the deceased, many were observed

observed to shed tears ; but nothing could equal poor Mrs. M.'s concern ; every one pitied her ; especially those who knew her valuable daughter when living, for *they* only could have an adequate idea how great her loss was. You see, my dear, from the particular account I have given of every circumstance relating to Miss M. and her mother, how ready and desirous I am of entertaining you when it lays in my power. The story, however mournful and affecting, was your request ; as such I willingly complied in sending it to you. The best use I think we both can make of it, is, to be dutiful and obedient to *our* parents, that they may have as much reason to love us, as Miss M. was beloved by her tender mother and all her acquaintance ; and to set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, knowing that all things here are changeable and inconstant, fading and passing away ; but all above is abiding and secure, and will remain unalterably the same through a long eternity.

I remain,

Dear Berinda,

Your's till death,

## LETTER VIII.

*From a gentleman lately retired into the country to his friend in town, with reasons in defence of a rural life, and reflections on happiness and contentment.*

DEAR SIR,

IN your last (which I received on returning from a very pleasant walk, my amiable Sobrina and I had been taking, in one of the finest evenings the summer has afforded) you rally me on my sylvan expedition, as you are pleased to term it, and seem to intimate your dislike of my leaving town; but by way of excuse mention this as a reason, as it deprives you of my company and conversation; (very polite I must own, however.)

IN vindication of myself, and to satisfy your enquiry, what could induce me to take up such a resolution, as that of returning into the country; I will give you my reasons for so doing, and those particularly which had *most* weight with me; though it may be, in *your* view, they appear trifling, or no *substantial* reasons at all.

THE first was for my health, but more especially that of my dear partner's, as she was often troubled with violent pains in her head, accompanied with little or no rest at night. To which  
you

you may reply, Could you not as well have taken a house for the summer near town, where you might have gone in the evening and come back in the morning, or taken short excursions for a fortnight or three weeks at a time about the country, without *entirely* abandoning your London friends? I answer, we both of us thought it better to settle at a distance from town, as the farther we went, the more pure and healthy we accounted the air would be; and that the hurry and fatigue of continually going backwards and forwards (in a great measure) would spoil the pleasure we should otherways take in the country.

The next was, as the calmness and serenity of a rural situation best suits with, and is most likely to increase that tranquillity of mind, composure of thought, and love of reflection, which is so naturally to be desired by every contemplative man; and all those who are fond of admiring and studying the works of art and nature, as you know I am much delighted with. In the next place, I was certain that nothing more contributed to promote serious meditation, nor afforded greater opportunities of searching into the truths of religion, the wisdom of God, and the concerns of the soul, without disturbance or annoy, than the peaceful shades of a country retreat; and indeed, what can render us more acceptable to the Supreme Being, than spending our lives in  
his

his fear and service? I don't intend, by retiring into the abodes of rural felicity, to lead an idle, vain, and slothful life of indolence and inactivity, if so, you might well have censured me for the design I had in view; but this was not the case, I knew there were various duties and employments which I might spend my time in, both for my own and my fellow creatures benefit and advantage, while enjoying the calm and serene pleasures of retirement; which I will inform you of in my next, with an account of the manner I spend my time, and hope fully to convince you thereby, that not one single minute hangs heavy on my hands, as you seem to think it must: at present I only beg leave to add, as the pursuit of happiness and desire of contentment is implanted in every one more or less; they will, and do naturally excite all men, to use those several means and endeavours for the obtaining of them, which seem most likely for that purpose. One thinks happiness is procured by riches, therefore makes the getting them his whole concern; another supposes (vain imagination!) it consists in high sounding titles and the grandeur of a court, therefore makes the pursuit of honours and emoluments the business his life; a third places his felicity in gaiety and amusements, or in gaming and licentiousness, and on that account is lost in vanity or overwhelmed

whelmed in dissipation, and (dreadful thought) it may be, neither of them perceive their fatal mistake till it is too late; how thankful then should those be, whom an indulgent Providence directs to the best methods of gaining happiness, and gives both a will and opportunity to practise them. For my part I must own, the surest way to be happy in one's self, and contented in every station, appear to me, leaving all to the wise disposal of the Creator of Heaven and earth \*, and looking on whatever happens to us here below, whether prosperous or adverse, as ordered for the best by Infinite Wisdom and unerring Goodness; this I hope I have done thus far, and shall continue to do (as enabled) till death, firmly persuaded of Mr. Pope's assertion, that

. . . Whatever is, is right †.

I cannot leave off, without sincerely wishing you and your's all that felicity, comfort, and satisfaction this world can give, and eternal happiness, when time shall be no more.

And remain, your's, &c.

\* We to ourselves may all our wishes grant,

For nothing coveting, we nothing want. *Dryden.*

† The omniscient and omnipresent Creator must know what is best for his creatures; and as he is the Governor of the universe, has all things under his command, and will assuredly make all events turn out in the end for his own glory, and the real benefit and happiness of his people, 'tis our duty and interest to believe it.

## LETTER IX.

From the same. *Giving an account of the manner he spent his time. With an extract from Thomson's Poem on the Summer.*

DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED much pleasure in reading over your's of the 21st instant (especially that part where you say, you are fully persuaded of the truth of the *latter* end of my last letter by *self-experience*) and now, according to your desire, send you an account of the manner I spend my time. In the morning I rise most commonly between five and six, and go into my study (which is a small but very pleasant room, overlooking my garden into a spacious meadow, where the sportive lambs bleat harmless through the ever-living verdure) here, after offering up my thankful acknowledgments to the Almighty for the mercies of the night past, and humbly imploring his future care and protection, I sit down and read for about a quarter of an hour; then, if it is fine weather, I take a walk through the adjacent fields, and enjoy the fragrance of the mellifluous gales that bear on their refreshing wings from every opening bud, unnumbered sweets; this is a pleasure unknown to the inhabitants of London, and an employment which  
business

business precludes. Indeed the greatest part of mankind have no relish for such an enjoyment, but had rather indulge themselves in wasting their hours in sleep; to them it is no loss, their being deprived of this pleasure, and therefore cannot be regretted; but to me, who really experience great delight and satisfaction in it, 'tis additionally pleasing and agreeable. About a quarter before nine I return home to breakfast, after which my beloved Amelia joins with me in adoring that unmerited goodness and mercy which we can truly say, hath thus far followed us all the days of our lives, and continues to heighten that happiness and felicity which we both have great cause to own (with gratitude and praise to the divine Author) took place on our union with each other. Had I not good reason to believe you my real friend and sincere well wisher with respect to both worlds, I should not be so particular and exact in this part of my account; but as I am certain of your forgiveness, should I exceed the length of an epistle, I am determined not to conceal the smallest circumstance concerning my employments, that I think, in the least, will give you pleasure in the perusal, much less that part of them which I know you practise yourself, and therefore cannot but approve. About eleven, supposing it is fine, I take a ride with my dear Amelia about seven or eight

eight miles, and then return to dinner; or if not so convenient for us both to be out, I go by myself, but never enjoy half the pleasure as when she is with me (there are very few I believe so happy with each other now-a-days.) After dinner I take a turn or two round my garden, and then into an exceeding pleasant summer-house, where I have a small collection of books, both moral and religious, with two or three different sorts of telescopes and microscopes, globes, maps, and a machine for viewing prints, furnished with a great variety of the finest and most delightful views England affords. Here I employ myself 'till tea, sometimes in reading books, or writing down those reflections I make upon the several objects around me; or, if it is not very hot, I take my fishing tackle and spend an hour or two in angling in a fine canal about twenty yards from my house, while my dear partner and companion reads some passages out of Thomson's Seasons, Paradise Lost, or Hervey's Meditations, which are our favourite authors. After tea, Amelia and I (like an old fashioned couple) take a walk together arm in arm through the flowery meads, to behold the pomp and grandeur of the setting sun, and beguile the passing hours in tender and endearing converse; which always reminds me of those lines in Thomson's Summer:

. . . . . Social friends,  
 Attun'd to happy unison of soul;  
 To whose exalting eye a fairer world,  
 Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,  
 Displays its charms; whose minds are richly  
     fraught

With philosophic stores, superior light;  
 And in whose breast, enthusiastic, burns  
 Virtue, the sons of interest deem romance;  
 Now call'd abroad enjoy the falling day:  
 Now to the verdant Portico of woods,  
 To Nature's vast Lyceum, forth they walk;  
 By that kind school where no proud master reigns,  
 The full free converse of the friendly heart,  
 Improving and improv'd.

About half past seven we return home, and most  
 commonly between eight and nine call our family  
 together, to praise the God of our mercies for  
 the blessings of the day, and beg the continuance  
 of his providential care and protection through  
 the night\*; after which we go to supper, and  
 about a quarter before eleven retire to rest, whilst  
 health surrounds our dwelling and silence invites  
 repose. I remain, dear friend,

Your's sincerely.

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\* A person fond of reading and meditation, of a  
 serious disposition, and who has a taste for poetry,  
 painting, music, drawing, and the like; may always  
 find employment, though retired from business, and  
 is best suited to lead a life of solitude, without weariness  
 and indolence.

## LETTER X.

From the same. *Wherein he further urges several arguments in vindication of a retired life, and concludes with an account of a set of poor country people he had determined to relieve.*

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**N answer to your question (what would become of trade and commerce were all men in business not only as fond of retirement as I am, but left town to enjoy it?) I reply, as it hath pleased the Great Creator in infinite wisdom to give a different set of features to every man, whereby he may be distinguished from the rest of his fellow-creatures with facility and ease, to prevent that confusion, and those numerous mistakes, which must unavoidably arise from too great a similarity of persons, and resemblance of countenance among men; so he hath very wisely ordained in the course of his Providence, different tempers, dispositions, and inclinations to different men, according to the several stations in which he hath placed them in the world; that contentment and satisfaction may not be peculiar to *one* station only, but attainable in *all*; from hence it is, that we often see the laborious hind, who may well be said to earn  
his

his bread with the sweat of his brow, as easy and contented (if not far more so) when following the plough, as the king upon his throne, surrounded with all that the heart can wish, want, or desire, to make it happy; hence it is, that the servant is as much pleased in his state of servitude, as the master in his state of independancy; or the meanest vassal as satisfied in his daily toil, as the wealthy lord in the enjoyment of riches, grandeur, and magnificence. In some, ambition, or love of glory, stimulates to warlike and heroic actions; in others, avarice, or desire of riches, provokes to industry, diligence, and application; necessity drives many to pursue labour, whilst inclination prompts others to seek retirement. That there will always be a sufficient number, ready and willing to attend to, and prosecute the concerns of trade, need not be doubted; and therefore, your question in your last must naturally fall to the ground.

INDEED, had there been any likelihood of my having many children, I should have esteemed it my indispensable duty to have continued in business, in order to be enabled to lay up something for each of them, suitable to the education they might receive, and their several stations in life. But as there was nothing of this sort, and enjoying at present an easy fortune, with an inclination for rural solitude, in which Amelia

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seemed

seemed to join with me, unambitious of shining in the ball-room or glittering at court, I thought I might indulge myself herein, without the least deviation from the rules of religion or morality. I believe I forgot to mention in my last, the set of weekly pensioners I have chosen, to partake of a handsome dinner and one shilling each, every Friday throughout the winter, and once a month in the summer, with this addition, the 12th of July, the day on which my dear Amelia and I were united, they are to have half a crown apiece given them, to remember that happy day. This resolution we intend as a token of our thankfulness for the mercies we enjoy, and the grateful sense we retain of the Almighty's goodness towards us; for how can the favourites of heaven better show their gratitude for the bounties of Providence, than in songs of praise to God and charity to men, according to that text of Scripture, "to whom much is given, much is required;" or in what manner can we better please him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, than in contributing freely to the wants and necessities of our fellow creatures in distress. I look on the rich and affluent, as the almoners or stewards of the most High, and therefore, cannot but think it their duty to share those temporal blessings with them to whom they are denied; assured of the truth of the prophet's words,

*"Cast*

*"Cast thy bread on the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."*

UNIVERSAL benevolence or philanthropy, teaches to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and do to others even as we would have them do unto us, knowing that our great Lord and Master, speaking of charity, saith, *forasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these little ones, ye do it unto me.* But I must not detain you longer on this subject, lest I tire you. I am,

Dear Friend,  
Your's, &c.



## LETTER XI.

*From Miss B. to a young lady in town, inviting her to spend the summer with her in the country, with a description of the pleasures of rural solitude.*

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

YOU cannot be so immersed in the amusements of the town, as to dislike a short relaxation from them for a few months during the summer, to oblige a distant, though *sincere* friend, with your agreeable company. I know you too well, to suppose you can ever be so entirely swallowed up with balls, plays, or masquerades,

as to forget your real well wishers in the country ; no, Charlotte, I have not yet, and hope never shall have the least reason to harbour such a thought of you ; to prevent which, let me beg your acceptance of my invitation to favour me with an early and long visit in ——shire ; where, if a cordial reception and friendly treatment can prevail with you to comply with my request, I shall certainly expect to see you in three weeks time. The pleasures of the country are now daily increasing, whilst the diversions of the town are lessening apace ; the weather is too warm for plays, assemblies, or routs, and the lengthening days invite to rural scenes. Come then and spend the sultry hours with me, secured from heat by lofty spreading elm trees, near the pleasing murmurs of a neighbouring stream. Here you may, unmolested, enjoy the concert of the groves, and view the works of nature and art without annoy. Here, far removed from the noise of carts and coaches, the smoke of London and the hurry of trade, we may spend the passing hours in improving and agreeable converse, or when the weather permits, in riding, walking, fishing, and the like rural and healthy exercises. Permit me to transcribe some lines written a few weeks ago by a young gentleman in our neighbourhood, entitled, *The Pleasures of the country*, with which I will conclude my present dull performance.

When ruddy Morn unbars the gates of light,  
 And op'ning prospects catch the pilgrim's sight  
 From yonder hills; the birds on ev'ry spray,  
 In tuneful accents hail the new-born day.  
 The fields and meadows, wet with evening dews,  
 Like diamonds glitter with unnumber'd hues;  
 But soon (as beauteous charms which men adore)  
 The heat increasing, they are seen no more.  
 Now to their flocks the shepherds swift repair,  
 Whilst gentle zephyrs fan the balmy air;  
 The busy bees their daily toils renew,  
 And lab'ring ants their different cares pursue.  
 Now is the time to walk the distant fields,  
 Whilst every breeze a sweeter fragrance yields,  
 To view the beauties of the rising morn,  
 And tread the plains which numerous flocks adorn;  
 To pass thro' meadows where the lambkins play,  
 Or o'er yon hills pursue my early way.  
 When Noon arrives, O say, my tender friend,  
 (On whom may every earthly bliss descend,  
 My fair Belinda; whose is every grace  
 That charms the soul, or can adorn the face;)   
 O say, how welcome are those cool retreats,  
 Where we have oft (secur'd from sultry heats  
 By lofty trees, amongst the sweetest flow'rs)  
 In pleasing converse spent the noon-tide hours;  
 Or coolly seated near a neighb'ring brook,  
 We've read by turns some chosen fav'rite book  
 Of Hervey, Milton, Thomson, Pope, or Gay,  
 Or else in angling past the time away.  
 When Evening comes, how charming 'tis to hear  
 The tuneful songs which strike the list'ning ear

From yonder grove ; whilst every breeze is still,  
 And echo bears the notes from hill to hill.  
 When Night returns, how pleasing to behold  
 The sky enlighten'd as with studs of gold ;  
 To view the moon begin his nightly round,  
 And shed his pallid lustre o'er the ground ;  
 How blest to sleep secure from noise and strife :  
 Such are the pleasures of a country life.

Your's unalterably, &c.



## LETTER XII.

*From Florimond to Alcander, his nephew, advising him against the temptations to which his age and situation exposed him.*

MY DEAR NEPHEW,

**A**S I not only have a great regard for you, but would willingly manifest it on every suitable occasion ; permit me to address you, as one who has both your temporal and eternal interest at heart ; as one, who has not only past through, but is well acquainted with the snares and temptations your age and station expose you to. Hear what the wise man saith, and lay up his admonitions in thine heart ; “ I receive my instruction, and not silver ; and wisdom rather than choice gold ; for wisdom is better than riches.”—

Providence

Providence has placed you in a very promising situation in life, though surrounded with dangers and encompassed with allurements. Remember you are young; your indulgent father was taken from you in a very early period, but your tender and affectionate mother is still continued, I doubt not as a great blessing. Oh be concerned to prove the same to her; endeavour, by your dutiful and endearing behaviour, to make up (as far as lies in your power) the loss of her much loved partner and companion. All her hopes are fixed on you, that you will be a comfort and blessing to her, whilst he is mouldering in the dust; let your actions prove you worthy of those several amiable characters, which the Almighty has given you the opportunity of supporting as a man and christian; I mean, a dutiful son, a tender husband, an indulgent parent, a worthy master, and a sincere friend; by so doing you will gain universal love, and recommend yourself to the favour and approbation of your God †.

As youth is a time when appetites and passions are strong, too apt to govern and too often lead astray from the paths of innocence and virtue, let me persuade you, my dear Alcander, to take

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heed

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† I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me; spoken by God under the metaphor of wisdom. Proverbs viii. 17.

heed unto your steps that you slip not ; beware of the first enticements to sin, those which you may improperly call *little* sins, and which you may be led to think God will take no notice of ; what these are, I leave your own conscience to inform you. Remember that truly just observation of a Latin author,

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus,

which is thus english'd by Mr. Pope in his Essay on Man, epistle ii. line 207.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mein,

As to be hated needs but to be seen ;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,

We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Always retain a deep sense of your inability to think a good thought, or speak a right word of yourself, and look up to heaven daily for guidance and direction, according to Solomon's admonition to his son, in the third of the Proverbs and the sixth. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy steps.

LET the assurance of the omniscience and omnipresence of Jehovah in all places, and at all times (for darkness is the same as noon-day to him) keep you ever upon your guard, preserve you from sinful compliances, and prevent your falling ; so that when Satan or the world may tempt you to gratify your lustful appetites, or indulge your sensual passions, by suggesting, now

is a fine opportunity, no one can see you, do it now or never ; you may be enabled to say with Joseph, "*How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?*"

WITH respect to your business, be concerned to make it a pleasure, not pleasure your business ; as a tradesman, be honest, sober, prudent, and discreet ; leave as little as possible to servants, knowing that the master's eye makes the horse fat. As a christian, be humble and vigilant in all your actions ; "*Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation, for your adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ;*" make the Scriptures the rule of your conduct, and the welfare of your immortal soul your chief concern. I wish you well ; let me hear from you often, and see you whenever it is convenient. I hope your dear and worthy mother is well ; tell her I expect a long visit from her this summer, or shall think she has quite forgot me. I remain,

Your affectionate Uncle,

## LETTER XIII.

*From Philander to Aristus, a merchant ; with an account of his brother's death, and the great change it had wrought in him ; with the speech his brother made just before his dissolution.*

**H**OWEVER, my dear friend, you may be wholly taken up with the concerns of business or pursuits after pleasure and festivity (while you sail down the tide of affluence with a brisk gale, without a thought of, or preparation for an approaching storm, as certain and unavoidable, as it is destructive both to passenger and vessel) permit me to remind you (without offence) that you are mortal ; that after all your toil and anxiety for encreasing riches, and the meat which perisheth, you must ere long die, and leave them to those (who it may be) will have the greatest reason (in the end) to wish they had never had them.

You will, I doubt not, be much surprized to read such a grave unfashionable letter from one, who has so often wrote to you on the most gay and dissipated topics ; but your wonder will cease when I tell you, my brother died yesterday morning in all the agonies of sorrow and despair : he who was so lately my chief companion in vice and sensuality,

sensuality, and who at first persuaded me to join with him in his follies and extravagance, is now no more. *You* well knew how he lived, and *I* how he died; his groans still sound in my ears, and his last words dwell with horror in my mind. Oh sir, though we may at present revel in sin, and account religion no better than a fable, and think futurity an idle tale; there is, I am persuaded, a time coming, when we shall awake out of this pleasing dream, and experience our fatal delusion (it may be) too late. That remarkable line in Young's Night Thoughts, which I was a witness to the truth of yesterday,

Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*,

has, I hope, convinced me of the error of my ways, and brought me to reflect on my past life with concern. My brother was taken ill last Sunday with a violent fever, occasioned (the physician apprehends) by excessive drinking; as the Friday before he spent the evening with several of his unthinking associates, and did not return home till between one and two the next morning, much disguised in liquor. As it happened, I was prevented accompanying him *this* evening, or I might have been as bad myself.

As he was the eldest son, my father (as is commonly done, but for what reasons I will not pretend to say) left him the greatest share of his estate;

estate; which he has very considerably lessened by his expensive way of living; being brought up to no business (another vulgar error) and having no relish for the rational amusements of life, but wholly given up to idleness and dissipation. He was never happier in his own opinion, than when in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, the ruin of innocence, or the intoxicating fumes of the bowl. Happy, thrice happy for me, had I looked on his vices with as much detestation and abhorrence, before I listened to his destructive admonitions and followed his ensnaring courses, as I do now; but oh! with what heart-felt sorrow and inexpressible concern I often repeat (and by sad experience am too well convinced of their veracity) those lines of a late poet:

“ He that *once* sins, like him who slides on ice,  
 “ Goes swiftly down the slippery paths of vice;  
 “ Tho’ conscience checks him, yet those rubs got o’er,  
 “ He sins securely, and looks back no more\*.

*Dryden.*

DELUDED with a false notion of pleasure, my youth got the better of my reason; and I was led captive by—I tremble at the thought, my *brother*; he whom I should have last suspected of being my

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\* These lines can never be thought of too often, nor too well remembered and attended to, especially by youth.

my seducer into ruin ; he, who might have been my greatest friend ; but oh ! with what horror must I think, my chief and greatest enemy. But he is gone, and I forgive him ; may God forgive him. However, his wicked life was my only copy, may his death be *my* everlasting advantage, and *his* unspeakable and eternal gain. The words he uttered just before his dissolution, in a flood of tears, were to this purpose, addressing himself to me : “ Oh, Philander, my only and much beloved brother, ’twas me, wretched and undone creature as I am, that in your early years drew you into sin—not satisfied with being ruined myself, I took all the pains I could to bring you into the same condemnation. You have the greatest reason to hate, to curse me ; but I sincerely beg pardon of *God*, of *you*, and my own soul. Pray for me if you can, though I don’t deserve it ; pity me, lost and *forever* miserable as I must be (if the Almighty does not forgive me.) I have lived unmindful of the only thing that could make a dying bed comfortable and pleasant. I have forgot God, and now what can I expect but that he will forget me ; for though he is merciful, he must be just \*.

Oh,

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- \* For goodness in excess must be a sin,  
Justice must tame, whom mercy cannot win.

*Earl of Halifax.*

A God all mercy is a God unjust.

*Young.*

Oh, my dear Philander, be assured from the last words of a brother (if I deserve that title) on the verge of immortality, nothing can yield you the least consolation in the views of the grave, but religion——*that religion* which *I* have totally disregarded, and taught *you* to ridicule and despise. Happy for me if the pains I now feel, and the raging burnings of my present disease, could atone for the profligacy of my past conduct, and exempt me from that flaming fire which never shall be quenched; but no, they cannot, it is impossible. I am now fully convinced of that just observation, “*He that swims in sin shall sink in sorrow.*” Oh! let my death, which you will soon be a witness of, lead you to consider before it is too late, that there is a future, never-ending state of happiness and misery beyond the grave; that virtue and piety alone can lead you to the first \*, and vice and sensuality bring you to the latter. Farewell——forever.”

HERE he was overwhelmed with grief, and about an hour after expired——Forgive my tears, for I really loved him. I cannot proceed. Oh wretched Philander!

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\* Our life is short, but to extend that span  
To vast eternity, is *Virtue's* work. *Shakespeare.*

LETTER XIV.

*From Miss R. to a young lady in the country,  
describing the pleasures and amusements of  
the town, contrasted with the felicity of a  
country life.*

DEAR FRIEND,

F ORGIVE me if I say I envy your situation, surrounded with the innocent delights and enjoying the undisturbed tranquillity of the country, whilst I (much against my inclination) am daily hurried from one insipid diversion to another, merely to please the fancy of a near relation, under whose care (she having taken a great liking to me) my father hath thought proper to place me. Her name is Alton, a maiden lady about forty, with a very genteel fortune; and I must confess, uses me as well and tenderly as if I was her own daughter, though through a mistaken propensity to gaiety and parade, keeps a great number of servants, frequents public diversions, and dresses both herself and me in the richest silks she can procure. It may be you think, I ought not, out of gratitude for her kindness, to complain of her; I should not, did her taste lay a different way from what it does, if she evidenced as much concern for the improvement of my mind, as she is solicitous for the

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adorning

adorning of my body, and giving me a taste for the several amusements in vogue; but oh, my dear Cephisa, seldom or never do these interesting topics come upon the carpet. A complaint of this nature from a young woman in the bloom of life is very uncommon I own, and might appear rather ridiculous and methodistical to the greatest part of mankind; but to you (who have had a religious education, and been brought up in the same manner with myself) I am certain it must seem too melancholy and affecting to be past over in silence. But you may probably ask, if the way of life I am now in is so disagreeable to me, why I don't mention it to my father? Why, undoubtedly I should, had I not some reason to hope it would soon be altered; for the summer being far advanced, Mrs. Alton talks of going out of town in about a fortnight's time, to spend the remainder of it at her country seat in Warwickshire, a delightful place indeed (I was there last summer upon a visit with my father.) The gardens are laid out in the most rural manner I ever saw: here I promise myself some pleasure, even in the thought of being deprived the opportunity of frequenting public diversions, and entirely secluded from the smog and noise of London. But what will greatly tend to lessen the felicity of my rural situation is, the sad reflection of being so far distant from my father, brother,

brother, and sisters, and deprived of the company of my dear and engaging friend ; yet this, I cannot but persuade myself, will be in some measure made up, by the instructive and entertaining correspondence of both parties. When in town you did, and I know would often have called on me had I continued there ; but soon we shall be at so great a distance from each other, that I *must* not, nor *cannot reasonably* expect it. At present I am chiefly taken up in reading Clarissa, Grandison, &c. to my fair guardian ; or going in the evening to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, &c. where the height of the pleasure is reckoned to consist in seeing and being seen ; but you need not be informed what diversions these places afford, having been at each of them yourself, and left them without the least concern or regret, as a sad contrast to the unmolested retirements of rural solitude. I am, my dear friend,

Your's, &c.



## LETTER XV.

*From Cleander to Philos, assuring him how agreeable his letters would be to him ; concluding with an ode on health, which he wrote in one of his evening walks.*

DEAR FRIEND,

**T**HOUGH in the midst of every pleasure that sylvan retirement can afford, I cannot  
L rest

rest satisfied without writing to you, that I may have the wished-for opportunity of perusing your entertaining and instructive letters, fraught with all that elegance of style and perspicuity of composition, which runs (in so eminent a manner) through your literary productions. You may believe me (for flattery is my aversion) nothing can add more to my present happiness and tranquillity, than the company and conversation of my much loved Philos, and when unavoidably deprived of these, the receipt of his useful and amusing epistles. My present situation, as it secludes me from the noise and hurry of a crowded city, and leaves me to my own reflections without disturbance, suits far better with my inclination than my former way of life, but has this inconvenience attending it, preventing me seeing my friends as often as I could wish; which can be only alleviated in *some* measure by their obliging correspondence: this, as it is in their power to favour me with, I hope to enjoy (whenever opportunity suits) with that inward pleasure and delight which true friendship alone can relish or afford.

I HAVE just been taking a serious walk in one of the finest evenings the summer has afforded; the verdant fields, the flowery meadows, and the warbling songsters of the groves, all conspired to render walking pleasant and agreeable.

agreeable. My reflections as I pass along, were on the wonderful works of God in the Creation, and the greatness of the blessing of a good state of health \*, without which all nature would be but as a blank, and every enjoyment useless and insipid †.

WHOLLY swallowed up in these contemplations, I sat down on a grassy hillock, by the side of an hedge intermingled with various sweet smelling flowers; and in the height of a poetical reverie, wrote the following lines, which I take the liberty of sending you for your perusal and opinion of. I stile them,

### An ODE on HEALTH.

#### I.

HEALTH is a rich and heav'nly gift,  
Descending from on high,  
Which empty titles cannot gain,  
Nor sordid riches buy.

#### II.

Health is the parent of content,  
Composer of our strife,  
Adds sweetness to our joys below;  
Without it, what is life?

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\* The salt of life, which does to all a relish give.

*Cowley.*

† Mankind, as you vouchsafe to smile or frown,  
Find ease in chains, or anguish in a crown.

*Garth.*

III.

Health is the child of temperance,  
And prudence is its nurse ;  
To *worldly* men, depriv'd of this,  
Existence seems a curse.

IV.

Health is the sunshine of the soul,  
And body's sweet repose,  
In measure 'twill remove our griefs,  
And soften all our woes.

V.

Health is a blessing highly priz'd,  
By those who know its loss,  
Without it, honours, wealth, and fame,  
Are vain and empty dross.

VI.

Health is the rich man's needed friend,  
The poor their only wealth.  
'Twill double all enjoyments here ;  
So great a blessing's health.

VII.

For ever praise the Lord, my soul,  
For this his gift to me ;  
Oh may his praises be my theme,  
Thro' all eternity.

I FEAR I have already tired your patience,  
or would have sent you my thoughts on this  
subject

subject in prose; but at present permit me to  
 stile myself,

Your real friend and servant,

Cleander.



## LETTER XVI.

*From Miss L. to a young lady in town, giving  
 an account of a gentleman's falling in love  
 with her sister who was married; concluding  
 with an Ode on Friendship, or Platonic Love,  
 which he sent her enclosed in a letter, de-  
 claring his passion in the most pathetic terms.*

MY DEAR BELINDA,

**F**ORGIVE me troubling you with the fol-  
 lowing story, which, though it may not  
 be entertaining, is too true, and has caused my  
 sister much sorrow and concern. A young gen-  
 tleman of our town, greatly beloved and respected  
 by all his acquaintance, came to see my brother  
 about six weeks ago, for the first time since his  
 marriage. It happened that he was out; my  
 sister, as she knew who he was, and on what  
 account he came, begged him to stay, telling  
 him she expected Mr. Osborne home in half an  
 hour's time. He complied, and entered into a

very pleasing conversation with my sister and me, on the happiness of a country life, and the benefits of solitude and retirement; which subjects he discussed in such a sensible and entertaining manner, that could not fail of being agreeable to both of us. He drank tea, and staid till between seven and eight o'clock, when Mr. Osborne not coming home, he took his leave, begging his compliments to him, and that he would call another time. About a week afterwards he came again and found my brother at home; this afternoon he was dressed extremely genteel indeed, and being a tall likely young man, looked to great advantage. Mr. Osborne received him with all the politeness of a courtier, and at the same time with the pleasure and affection of a real friend. They conversed together I believe till near nine o'clock this evening, my sister and I were in the room most of the time, and he was observed often to smile at my sister and direct his discourse to her, but this was thought nothing particular of, as my brother knew him to be a sober and deserving young gentleman: however, when he went away, he gave my sister one or two very expressive and tender looks (unobserved by Mr. Osborne) which put her into great confusion. He repeated his visits every week afterwards till within these nine days, under pretence of just calling as he went by, always enquiring how

Mrs,

Mrs. Osborne did, especially if he did not happen to see her, which made me suspicious there was something more in his visits than either of us thought of, though he always behaved in a becoming manner, and seemed only desirous of being accounted a friend. Indeed he used often to ask my brother to make a party with my sister and me, and spend a day or two with him at his country house in Oxfordshire (an estate his father left him about a year and a half ago) which Mr. Osborne promised to do before the end of the summer; but to our great surprize, my sister received a letter yesterday morning, which, when she opened, she found was from him. As it may be your desire to know the contents of it, I send you the following as a genuine copy, together with some verses which were inclosed, begging the favour of you not to show them to any one, as my sister is desirous to have them kept a secret from the world, lest Mr. Osborne hearing of it, should make himself uneasy on the account.

“ Too amiable Maria,

“ THE heartfelt pleasure and satisfaction I  
 “ have lately enjoyed in your agreeable company  
 “ and converse, too plainly evinces the ardour  
 “ of my affection for *one*, who (as she is un-  
 “ alterably engaged for life) cannot with the  
 L 4 “ least

“ least pretence to prudence and discretion,  
 “ make any returns for such an unhappy passion ;  
 “ which though I know, and acknowledge, to  
 “ be improperly fixt upon so unwarrantable an  
 “ object, yet am not able to subdue it ; such  
 “ (too dear Maria !) is the force of youthful  
 “ esteem, too early cherished and imbibed in a  
 “ tender breast, and so imprudently encouraged.  
 “ I condemn myself a thousand times, for having  
 “ given it the least room, in my more thoughtful  
 “ moments, especially as I’m convinced of its  
 “ unlawfulness, and how contrary it is to those  
 “ sacred principles I have been educated in, and  
 “ profess to follow. But what shall I ? what can  
 “ I say ? To attempt to excuse myself, would  
 “ only be to aggravate my crime ; to endeavour  
 “ to extenuate its guilt, the means of making it  
 “ appear the blacker : all that I can offer in my  
 “ own defence, I am certain is only the plead-  
 “ ings of corrupt nature ; and that common  
 “ observation, we cannot command our passions.  
 “ But however frequently this may be adopted  
 “ by the sensualists of the age ; yet how vain  
 “ and insignificant must it appear in the eyes  
 “ of sensible (not to say) religious men ; such  
 “ language is a questioning the Almighty’s  
 “ wisdom in the formation of our passions, and  
 “ murmuring at his works, as though they  
 “ were imperfect, which is as impious as it is  
 “ absurd,

“ absurd, and borders upon infidelity, immorality,  
 “ and profaneness.—The prudent behaviour  
 “ with which you have always treated me, has  
 “ made me appear ridiculous even to myself,  
 “ and the proper object of your just contempt  
 “ and hatred: had you behaved otherwise, we  
 “ both might have been ruined; but that re-  
 “ spectful distance and veneration your words and  
 “ actions inculcated and enforced, has been, I  
 “ hope, the means of reclaiming me from the  
 “ most iniquitous pursuits, and taught me, my  
 “ own weakness, folly, and imprudence, in en-  
 “ couraging an esteem so opposite to every law,  
 “ human and divine.

“ THAT you are worthy of the best of hus-  
 “ bands, I am fully persuaded, and happy in  
 “ seeing you possess of; but oh! how often do  
 “ I repent the moment I first admitted this puerile  
 “ esteem to take place and destroy my peace?  
 “ how have I struggled with myself to overcome  
 “ it, but in vain! all the arguments that consci-  
 “ ence alledged against it, every consideration  
 “ religion afforded to dissuade me from it, were  
 “ fruitless and ineffectual. I have for some  
 “ weeks past continued in the practice of what  
 “ I cannot but disapprove, and am fully con-  
 “ vinced of my error without a power to reform;  
 “ with what readiness have I argued against it,  
 “ and painted its odiousness in the strongest co-  
 “ lours,

" lours, but to no purpose ; the tumult of my  
 " troubled mind increafes daily, and what will  
 " be the confequence I cannot tell, where it  
 " will end, God only knows. Confcious that I  
 " deferue your fcorn, I ftand felf-condemned ;  
 " but if your relenting difpofition can pity my  
 " deplorable fituation, I earneftly intreat your  
 " compaffion and forgiveness. Your good fenfe  
 " and affability, together with your agreeable  
 " perfon and address, all confpire againft me,  
 " and every renewed vifit does but heighten  
 " my affection, in oppofition to that indiffer-  
 " ence it is my duty to encourage. As yet,  
 " I have (in fome meafure) ftifled my paffion ;  
 " fhould it increafe I muft tear myfelf from you  
 " —forever. Your acceptance of the following  
 " lines, occafioned by my ftiling my affection  
 " for you, Friendfhip or Platonic Love, will  
 " lay me under infinite obligations, and be the  
 " *laft* favour I fhall presume to ask of the *too*  
 " dear and amiable Maria.

AN ODE ON FRIENDSHIP OR PLATONIC  
 LOVE, addreffed to a married Lady.

I.

TOO lovely Fair, whole every grace,  
 Attracts the wand'ring eye ;  
 Whole mind, as beauteous as thy face,  
 Does ftill new charms fupply.

Accept

Accept a young unskilful poet's lays,  
Whose first ambition is to gain your praise,

II.

Friendship, thou dear and much-lov'd name,  
Assist my early lays ;  
Inspir'd with thy angelic flame,  
I fain would sing thy praise.  
O Thou ineffimable gift to men,  
Celestial Goddess, aid my feeble pen.

III.

Friendship, thou balm of every woe,  
And softner of our pains,  
Who heightens all our joys below,  
Forgive these humble strains.  
Oh speak the blessings which thy steps attend,  
Say what's contain'd in that one word—a Friend.

IV.

Friendship alone in deep distress,  
Will ease the painful heart,  
For every trouble seems the less  
When friendship bears a part \*.  
She stops the progress of increasing strife,  
And adds new relish to the sweets of life.

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\* . . . . Who knows the joys of friendship ?  
The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,  
The double joys, where each is glad for both ?

*Rowe.*

## V.

Friendship alone in every grief  
 Partakes a willing share,  
 In sickness yields a kind relief,  
 And comforts in despair.  
 When thro' unseen misfortunes wealth declines,  
 In poverty true friendship brightest shines.

## VI.

Friendship the sinking spirits cheers,  
 And stills the anxious breast,  
 In danger will remove our fears,  
 And give our sorrows rest.  
 Tho' fore afflictions seize the vital frame,  
 Friendship remains unchangeably the same.

## VII.

Friendship in every state and age,  
 Will ever welcome prove,  
 The mind with all its powers engage,  
 And melt the soul to love.  
 O sing her praise, ye angels tell her worth,  
 A life of friendship is a heav'n on earth \*.

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- \* Celestial Happiness, whene'er she stoops  
 To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,  
 And one alone, to make her sweet amends  
 For absent Heav'n,—the bosom of a friend;  
 Where heart meets heart reciprocally soft,  
 Each other's pillow to repose divine.

*Young's Night Thoughts.*

YOUR patience, my dear Belinda, must be greater than Job's, not to be quite exhausted in reading so long an epistle; therefore, *sans ceremonie*, Adieu.



## LETTER XVII.

*From Miss I. to a relation in town, giving an account of the death of an amiable young lady, an intimate friend of hers, with an epitaph made on her, by a gentleman in the neighbourhood.*

DEAR COUSIN,

IT may be you have heard of the death of my intimate friend Miss M. but lest you should not, I take this opportunity to inform you she died last Tuesday, about four o'clock in the afternoon. She was taken ill the Wednesday before with a violent cold, which terminated in a high fever the Saturday following. At times she was delirious, but when in her senses, no one could be more patient and resigned. Her sister (by her desire) sent for me last Sunday, just as I came from church in the morning; I saw their man coming along, and overtaking me as I got to our door, he told me his message with

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seemingly

seemingly great concern; the substance of which was, that Miss M. was extremely ill indeed, and desired to see me to take her leave of me, as she did not expect to live but a few hours. You may be sure the news filled me with sorrow, anxiety, and surprize; as I was with her but the Tuesday before, when she was quite chearful and well. After acquainting my father with the message, I went immediately to their house, and being conducted by a weeping servant to the melancholy chamber, found Mrs. L. her sister, sitting by the bed-side dissolved in tears. The physician had been there and was just gone, after having pronounced the fever dangerous. As soon as she saw me, she attempted to speak; the violence of her grief stopt her utterance, and after waving her hand three or four times, lost her senses and raved for about ten minutes, then fell into a gentle doze and slept near half an hour. When she awaked, she seemed better, but very low; on seeing how much the sight of me affected her, I thought it most proper to go into another room till she recovered herself, which I did. When she found me gone she asked her sister where I was, and being told, desired with great earnestness to see me. When I went to the bed-side to her, she took hold of my hand, and said, looking on me with much tenderness and concern,—“My dear, dear friend,  
little

little did I think last Tuesday of your seeing me so soon, in the alarming situation I am now in; but we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. Forgive my sending for you to behold a sight, the most painful and distressing to human nature, the dying agonies of (one who I know you account) a dear friend; but it was my strong affection for you, which made it impossible for me to think of leaving all things here, without taking a last, a long farewell of you.—Death appears not terrible to me, but the parting with my dear friends, whom I so much love, and by whom I know myself beloved, cuts me to the heart.” Here she was again overcome with grief and unable to proceed; upon which, telling her I would return in a short time, I left her and went home, with eyes swollen with tears, and a heart big with sorrow.

ON calling the next morning to know how she did, they informed me she was much worse, the fever greatly increased, and very little in her senses. I thought it would be of no service to go up to see her, therefore I went back again, and as soon as I got into my room gave way to a genuine and unfeigned concern. Monday night the physician said, she would change very soon for the better or worse, which she did,

*indeed*, about four o'clock on Tuesday morning, when she appeared on the verge of her dissolution, and continued growing worse till the time she died, taking leave of her sister about three o'clock in the afternoon, in a very affectionate and pathetic manner, and desiring her to tell *me*, she hoped to renew our friendship in heaven. About half an hour after, she was in extreme pain, in the height of which she calls out to her sister, "My dear Betsy, join with me in praying for the best of blessings on my dear father, you, my dear friend Miss I. and all mankind;" then taking hold of her hand, kist it several times heartily, and lifting up her eyes and hands, with her sister's inclos'd in them, to heaven, she attempted to pray; but the violence of her disorder took away her senses, and she continued so till her death.

HER sister never left her room, from the time I was with her on Sunday. I cannot but sympathize with her, for she is quite inconsolable. The following epitaph was made on her by a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, which (as it appears the real dictates of sympathetic friendship and esteem) I send for your perusal.

THE author is to be supposed sitting in a thoughtful posture, but on hearing the bell toll from a neighbouring steeple, starts, and says,

What

What sounds are these which strike my list'ning ears,  
 Awake my sorrows and alarm my fears  
 From yonder steeple? 'Tis the dismal knell  
 Of some departed spirit; who can tell  
 But now the deathless being dwells above,  
 In endless regions of eternal love,  
 (Beyond the reach of every human pain,  
 Whose loss to friends, is her superior gain?)  
 It does, for Oh—the dear Maria's dead,  
 To realms of joy the blessed spirit's fled.  
 She's gone, she's gone; assist my feeble lays,  
 Ye sacred Nine, to sing her matchless praise  
 In plaintive strains. Oh lend your skilful aid,  
 Celestial Muses, every tuneful maid  
 Join in the mournful song, with grief deplore  
 Maria's dead, and music is no more,  
 Maria's dead, repeat from shore to shore.  
 Maria's dead, in doleful accents cry,  
 Maria's dead, let hills and dales reply \*;  
 Ye distant meads, the sadd'ning message tell,  
 Maria's gone, ye green retreats farewell;  
 Ye pleasant fields where oft she us'd to stray,  
 Be cloth'd no more in Summer's bright array;  
 Ye lofty trees without your leaves appear,  
 Maria's gone, be winter all the year;  
 Ye shady groves in wither'd garbs deplore,  
 Maria's gone, and verdure is no more.

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But

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\* This is imitated from Pope's fourth Pastoral, *Call'd the Winter.*

BUT oh! what words can paint the sister's grief,  
 Or yield the weeping Fair the least relief?  
 Too lovely mourner, speak her real worth,  
 Who shar'd her best affections while on earth.  
 O tell what numbers mourn her early fate,  
 How much belov'd in this imperfect state?  
 Say how submissively she bore the rod,  
 How soon she gave *herself*, her *all* to God;  
 Speak thou, who wast till death her greatest friend,  
 What numerous sorrows did thy bosom rend;  
 When the dread fever rag'd in every vein,  
 And reason left her overwhelm'd in pain;  
 How did her flowing tears thy grief renew,  
 When sensible of death, she said—Adieu.  
 While pleasing hopes her lively faith supply'd,  
 She took her last farewell, and weeping died.

BUT oh! my tender friend, wipe every tear,  
 For tho' *she's* gone, your *Jesus* still is near;  
 Then let this thought revive your drooping heart,  
 You'll meet her soon above, no more to part.

Forgive me detaining you so long, and believe  
 me to be, with the greatest sincerity,

Your's unalterably.

But

M

This is imprinted from Pope's fourth Pastoral.  
 and the Winner.

## LETTER XVIII.

*From Sobrina to a friend; (in answer to a question, What pleasures are to be enjoyed in solitude and retirement?) With an extract from Thomson's Seasons.*

DEAR MIRA,

**T**HOUGH you are prejudiced in favour of the town, from your fondness of its diversions and amusements, I can say, from pleasing experience, with our great poet Milton,

Solitude sometimes is best society.

You seem to wonder at my dullness of taste, as you are pleased to term it, and would fain persuade me, true pleasures are only to be enjoyed in London. But you must forgive me if I differ from you here; there are pleasures in solitude which none but lovers of it know; true felicity has been always esteemed of a retired nature, and an enemy to grandeur, pomp, and noise; therefore chiefly found in the silent recesses of the country; where every thing that can instil calmness, serenity, and delight into the troubled mind, is found. But it is far above my poor abilities to describe the happiness of rural retirement, therefore, to answer the question in your last, permit me, my dear friend, to transcribe some lines out

of my favourite author, Thomson ; where painting the enjoyments of a country life in his poem on the Autumn, he says,

Oh knew he but his happiness, of men  
The happiest he ! who far from public rage,  
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,  
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.

.....  
Sure peace is his ; a solid life, estrang'd  
To disappointment, and fallacious hope ;  
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,  
In herbs and fruits ; whatever greens the Spring,  
When Heaven descends in showers ; or bends the  
bough

When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams ;  
Or in the Wintry glebe whatever lies  
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richest sap ;  
These are not wanting ; nor the milky drove,  
Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale ;  
Nor bleating mountains ; nor the chide of streams,  
And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere  
Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,  
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay.  
Here too dwells simple truth ; plain innocence ;  
Unfollied beauty ; sound unbroken youth,  
Patient of labour, with a little pleas'd ;  
Health ever blooming ; unambitious toil ;  
Calm contemplation, and poetic ease.

Forgive the length of this quotation ; but as  
nothing I ever met with, suits better with my

ideas of the happiness of solitude, I could not forbear transcribing it at full length. All I wish, is, that by reflecting on the justness and propriety of the above description, you may become a proselyte to my way of thinking, and adopt sentiments worthy the regard of a rational and immortal being, formed for higher and more noble purposes, than to be a slave to pleasure, or the gaze of fools. I remain,

My dear Mira,

Your's, &c.



## LETTER XIX.

*To Crito, a young gentleman mourning the loss of an indulgent father.*

S I R,

**T**HE Almighty has, in the course of his all-wise dispensations, thought fit to deprive you of a tender and indulgent father, whose chief concern was to see you walk in the paths of virtue and religion; one whose precepts and example you will do well to imitate and follow, as a proof of your regard and affection for so valuable a parent. Weep you may, I know you cannot refrain, when you think how much he loved you, how earnest and solicitous he was for

the advancement and promotion of your temporal and eternal welfare; but what will tears avail towards making up the loss you have sustained, or lessening the greatness of it? nothing. He only, who has made you fatherless, can be more than a father to you; implore his guidance and protection, make conscience of addressing him at all times and in every trouble; he will be a God at hand, and not afar off. Let the image of the father eminently appear in the life and conversation of the son, and be reflected by his amiable conduct and behaviour; trust not to your own judgment with respect to affairs of importance; you have relations and friends, who have your real and best interest at heart, consult and advise with them; they have seen and know more of the world than you can possibly be supposed to know, therefore better able to warn you of the dangers, snares, and temptations, to which you will be unavoidably exposed, and liable to fall into, in your passage through life; observe their admonitions and value their instructions; show your good sense, prudence, and understanding, by paying a suitable deference and respect to their opinion and counsel; walk circumspectly, live in holiness as well as profess it; endeavour to be an ornament in the station Providence has placed you; recommend the doctrines of the Gospel to others, by your exemplary walk and conversation,

conversation, so shall your father's God be your  
God, and your eternal portion, which is the  
earnest desire and prayer of,

Your sincere friend.



## LETTER XX.

*To Cleanthes, with a specimen of a poem in  
blank verse, on health and solitude, by a  
youth.*

S I R,

**Y**OU are pleased with the productions of  
younger minds, especially where piety seems  
to direct the pen ; permit me to send you the fol-  
lowing first attempts of a young gentleman, the  
son of a friend of mine, written (after a recovery  
from a fit of illness) on health and solitude, in  
blank verse ; which, if it meets with your  
approbation, shall take the liberty of sending you  
the remainder of it, the first opportunity.

O Thou the best of earthly blessings, Health,  
Celestial gift, but on a few bestow'd,  
Thou sweetner of our sorrows, hail ; to thee  
I dedicate my early lay, and strive to sing  
In humble verse thy praise. Ye sacred Nine,  
Harmonic sisters, lend your pleasing aid,

M 4

And

And warm my soul with true poetic fire ;  
 Teach me to mount as on an eagle's wing,  
 And catch seraphic ardor from on high.

THE man how blest, who on some rural plain  
 Lives undisturb'd, from all disorders free,  
 Breathes the fresh air, and drinks the cooling spring,  
 Estrang'd to sickness and to grief unknown ;  
 Far from the ceaseless din, the noise and strife  
 Of crowded cities and the haunts of trade,  
 Where industry unweary'd still pursues  
 Thro' every varied scene the means of gain.

THUS let me spend the few remaining hours  
 Which Providence indulgent may prolong,  
 While anxious cares and every sore distress  
 Which daily wait on mortals here below,  
 Reach not the peaceful cottage where I dwell.  
 What's life ? with all the pleasures of the world,  
 Without this grand restorative of bliss,  
 This greatest blessing lent to man below ?  
 'Tis all a visionary transient good,  
 Well stil'd a dream, a bubble quickly broke,  
 To ev'ry blast expos'd, to ev'ry wind  
 A prey.—Oh grant me then, Thou Great Supreme,  
 This chief enjoyment to possess it long,  
 Tho' not a stranger to the numerous pains  
 Which flesh is subject to, and all the woes  
 That constant wait on frail mortality.

I remain, Sir,

Your's to command.

## LETTER XXI.

*From Raltimond to Florolet, with reflections  
on the works of Providence, and the weak-  
ness of human wisdom : a fragment.*

LOOKING over some papers in my study this morning, I found the following extract from the Ledger, on the works of Creation, which greatly pleased me, and I doubt not, will be entertaining to my friend, as it is written in the stile and manner of his favourite author, Hervey, and contains sentiments worthy the regard of a man and christian. The time it refers to, being late of a Summer's evening, the author introduces it with those elegant lines from Pope's Homer.

. . . The moon, refulgent lamp of night,  
O'er Heav'n's clear azure, sheds her sacred light ;  
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene ;  
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole.

AMONG all the studies that engage the mind of man, the best adapted to Nature is that of Omnipotence ; this is a field sufficiently large for the most fertile genius to expand its faculties in, and affords a serious contemplation to learn its own weakness, and to adore that Almighty Being,

Being, who spoke the whole into existence, and still supports it by the breath of his mouth.

THE other evening, when the last beams of the departing day had tinged the fleecy clouds with glowing purple, I left the scenes of mirth and jollity, to enjoy the calmness of the air, and meditate on the wonders of the Creation. The Moon adorned the chambers of the East, and drew a silver mantle over the verdant carpet of Nature. Not the least noise disturbed the solemnity of the scene; the feathered songsters of the grove were retired to rest, and the herds and flocks were sleeping on the grassy surface of the meadows. In this silent and pleasing situation, I directed my eyes towards the azure arch of Heaven, viewed with wonder and admiration the grand theatre of the Universe, and wandered in idea through the boundless fields of Ether. I particularly remarked some of the planetary globes, which form our solar system, now shining with distinguished lustre, and reflected on the amazing velocity with which they perform their respective orbits round the Sun. Retire into yourselves, ye giddy mortals, think on your own weakness, ignorance, and folly, and you will soon be convinced how unable ye are to oppose the hand that formed universal Nature, or contend with that Wisdom that plan'd its various laws; remember your actions  
are

are all exposed to his view, nor are the most secret thoughts of your hearts concealed from his all-searching eye; the pitchy mantle of the night cannot hide any thing from him: tremble therefore, ye scoffers at Providence, ye sons of rapine, riot, violence, and wrong; be assured he marks every action of your lives, and will reward ye at last according to your doings. Vengeance, terrible as the dusty whirlwinds of the Arabian deserts, and sudden as the lightning's flash, will overtake you, and pour on your heads the just indignation of an offended God. Leave then the pursuits of injustice, debauchery, and profaneness, abandon the haunts of drunkenness and sensuality, and retire with me into the sequestered fields; contemplate the works of Heaven's Almighty, and you will soon be led to adore the Omnipotent Architect, and be convinced that happiness is only to be found in the paths of virtue and religion.

AN early epistle, with your opinion of the inclosed, will much oblige an old friend in the recesses of

Sylvan tranquility.

## LETTER XXII.

*From Miss M. to a relation, informing her how happy she is in her present situation ; with an allegorical vision, shewing the benefits of adversity.*

**I**T may appear very odd to my dear Amanda, that a young woman at my time of life, should prefer solitude and retirement, before gaiety and the diversions of the town, and though surrounded with pleasures and amusements, should willingly abandon them all, and declare myself in favour of the country ; but really they appeared to me so trifling and insipid, that I was quite tired of them ; there was such a sameness in most, and vanity in every scene daily presented to my view, that nothing but my cousin's obliging importunities could have prevailed on me to follow them so long. Her company and conversation was the greatest happiness I enjoyed in London ; with her I pass whole hours in amusing and instructive intercourse, and experienced more real and inward satisfaction from the pleasing marks of her friendship and esteem I continually received, than I possibly could do, from sparkling in a ball-room or shining at the play. Her constant endeavours to entertain me by making parties of pleasure, and going to the several places

places of public amusements, whilst they afforded me sufficient opportunities of making proper reflections on each, at the same time, convinced me of her desire and willingness to make my stay in town as agreeable as she could. How happy should I have thought myself, could I have prevailed on her to accompany me into the country, but with what regret I left her behind, my tears at parting evidenced.

I FOUND but one fault with her, which was her strong attachments to pleasures of a tumultuous kind, while mine were more of a retired nature, arising from an unconquerable fondness of rural solitude and sylvan contemplations, which I can enjoy in my present situation, unenvied by the great, forsaken by the gay, and undisturbed by all.

SINCE my return to silent groves, and shady bowers, she has favoured me with an account of a very remarkable dream she had one evening; the effects, she apprehends, of a conversation the day before with a friend, on the benefit of adversity and distress; which, as it is peculiarly striking and instructive, I cannot suppose there is any occasion to apologize for inclosing it.

LAST Monday Mrs. R—— called and drank tea with us, when the question was started by my mother (who was then much troubled with a violent pain in her head) Of what benefit is adversity,

adversity, and wherein can it be stiled useful to man in general †? At night, when I resigned myself to sleep, Fancy resumed her office, and imprest with the above enquiry, transported me in a moment into the most charming meadow I had ever seen. A murmuring stream flowed thro' the middle of it, and by its refreshing moisture, perpetually renewed it with all the beauties of the spring; the verdure of the ground, the gay flowers with which it was enamelled; the fragrance of the morning air, the sloping beams of the rising sun gilding a thick wood that appeared on one side of the meadow, all conspired to heighten the beauty of the scene, and give alacrity to the spirits. My heart exulted with joy as I pursued the course of the river or stream, which led to a temple situated at a distance on a rising ground, encircled with woodbines, jessamines, and myrtles, whose variegated blossoms cast forth a profusion of mingled sweets. To this temple, most travellers who entered the meadow, seemed at *first* inclined to bend their steps, but I observed scarce any that accomplished their purpose; growing tired with the straightness of the path, they presently quitted it, to ramble in the winding alleys of the neighbouring wood, which

promised

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† This dream was really the production of a young lady, and communicated to the author by a friend.

promised them greater variety. Some indeed, though but very few, easily came out again, and followed their first intention of going to the temple, while others, penetrating into the thickest part of the wood, were seen no more. My curiosity was awakened on seeing such numbers crowd the avenues to enquire where those several paths terminated; and perceiving a person of a grave and studious aspect, whose eyes were fixt on the multitudes before him, as if contemplating with a steady attention, their various manners, ways, and ends; I applied myself to him for information. At first he put me off with a slight answer, but on my repeating the question with an earnest solicitude, he smoothed his contracted brow, put on a more familiar and inviting air, told me his name was *Knowledge*, and offered to be my guide. I readily accepted him, and he address'd me with these words, " You see  
 " before you the meadow of *Truth*, whose lively  
 " verdure never decays, being constantly watered  
 " by the river of *Wisdom*; if you follow its  
 " course it will lead you to the temple of *Virtue*,  
 " through which you will arrive at that of per-  
 " fect felicity; but though it is a path of peace,  
 " and all its ways are pleasantness, how easily  
 " is it quitted for the sake of wandering in the  
 " wood of *Error*! Enticed by a view of its  
 " shady serpentine walks, and vainly imagining  
 " they

“ they can find a way out whenever they please,  
 “ they boldly enter, (fatal delusion !) and involv-  
 “ ing themselves in its intricate labyrinths are  
 “ lost forever. But let us go nearer, and take  
 “ a view of its principal avenues.” As we ap-  
 proached the entrance, my guide bid me take  
 notice of a peasant who was very busy in  
 offering to conduct the travellers through the  
 wood; “ See (said he) how readily they yield  
 “ themselves to the guidance of *Ignorance*, whose  
 “ appearance has nothing to invite their atten-  
 “ tion; for his habit, his air, his features,  
 “ speak the clown; yet such is the indolence of  
 “ mankind, they will accept the first conductor  
 “ who offers his service, rather than be at the  
 “ pains to obtain a proper one; but they severely  
 “ suffer for their negligence, for observe to  
 “ what dangers he exposes them; imposed on  
 “ by his false directions, look what a thorny  
 “ path that company is walking in, each endea-  
 “ vouring to outstrip his companion, in hopes of  
 “ obtaining the promised end of their labours,  
 “ titles, honours, and splendid distinctions; for  
 “ this he has told them is the path of *Ambition*:  
 “ but alas! what toil attends their steps? a  
 “ cruel hag stiled *Envy*, is perpetually haunting  
 “ them, they cannot fly from her, and she  
 “ scarcely ever permits them to rest; the farther  
 “ they advance, the thicker the briars shoot up,  
 “ and

“ and their reward is generally disappointment  
 “ and vexation of spirit. A little farther in that  
 “ narrow alley, you perceive a troop who walk  
 “ with their eyes fixt on the ground, and pro-  
 “ ceed with the most wary and cautious steps;  
 “ they are in the pursuit of riches, their way  
 “ is full of snares, *Care* is their constant com-  
 “ panion, and should they find the golden mine  
 “ they are searching after, 'tis in the midst of  
 “ so dreary a wilderness, and they have wandered  
 “ so far from the meadow of *Truth* and the river  
 “ of *Wisdom*, that they will never be able to  
 “ enjoy it.” But do I not see, said I, addressing  
 my guide, one path to which *Ignorance* is leading  
 those youths who resemble the beauty of the  
 meadow? 'Tis covered with turf and enamelled  
 with flowers, the air is perfumed with the fra-  
 grance of their odours, a crystal spring murmurs  
 as it flows o'er the glittering pebbles, the ear is  
 enchanted with the pleasing harmony of the  
 birds, who warble their melodious notes from  
 every bush; it appears to me the smiling path of  
*Pleasure*, which captivates at first the young and  
 gay, but is attended with temptations as fatal as  
 they are numerous? “ 'Tis true, reply'd my  
 “ conductor, that is the path of *Pleasure*; its  
 “ beginning is smooth, delightful, and ensnaring,  
 “ especially to youth, but its end is certain de-  
 “ struction; joy and festivity quickly forsake its  
 N “ followers,

“ followers, and in their room they are haunted  
 “ by *Poverty, Disease, Reproach, and Despair,*  
 “ that even death itself is a welcome relief from  
 “ so many distressing ills.” Terrified with this  
 view of the numerous evils that beset every  
 path in that dangerous wood, I exclaimed, Oh !  
 wretched travellers, to what miseries are you  
 exposed ! is there no friendly monitor to warn  
 you of the snares into which ignorance and love  
 of pleasure are leading you ? “ There is one,  
 “ replied my conductor, that both admonishes  
 “ and corrects them ; if they would hear and  
 “ attend to her instructions, she would lead them  
 “ back to the way they have forsaken. Though  
 “ her countenance is severe and her manners  
 “ unpolished, her counsels are dictated by pru-  
 “ dence, and there is not a more faithful adviser  
 “ than *Adversity* ; for man, though capable of  
 “ knowing what is good for him, is too fickle  
 “ and inconstant to pursue it, he is too impa-  
 “ tient to bear the slow guidance of *Knowledge,*  
 “ too variable to relish the uniformity of *Truth,*  
 “ and persevere in the strait road that leads to  
 “ *Virtue* ; thus he exchanges *Knowledge* for  
 “ *Ignorance,* leaves *Truth* for *Error,* and will  
 “ assuredly reap Misery instead of Happiness, if  
 “ the rod of *Adversity* does not chastise the folly  
 “ that is bound up in his heart.”—As we  
 turned from the wood to proceed to the temple,  
 I awoke,

I awoke, repeating these words, “ Nothing but *Adversity* will teach a man Wisdom, and make him attend to the dictates of Prudence.”

I WILL not make any remarks on the above at present, but leave it to your private meditations; and am, with the greatest sincerity, my dear Amanda,

Your's, &c.



## LETTER XXIII.

*From a gentleman to his sister, giving an account of the melancholy death of his wife, through the hard treatment of her relations. A true story.*

I HOPE my dear Amelia will excuse the incoherency, tautologies, &c. of the following epistle, being too much overwhelmed with sorrow and concern, on the unhappy catastrophe of one of the best of wives (my much loved and greatly lamented Cephisa) to write with accuracy and correctness. To you I know I may unbosom myself without reserve; pity me, Oh my sister, who, from being in the height of connubial felicity, am sunk in a few moments into the depth of human misery and distress. Yesterday evening I anticipated the dreadful storm, which

I'm now mourning the fatal effects of, with all the grief of a once loving husband, but now hapless and forlorn widower. Forgive me keeping you in suspense so long ; but oh ! with what words shall I relate the melancholy story, or describe the affecting scene this morning presented to my view. However the world may stile it a weakness and pusillanimity in a man to shed tears, I cannot help, on the present occasion, unmanning myself so far, and should think it an unfeeling stoicism, derogatory to human nature, if I did not. You know I married my dear Cephisa against the consent of her parents, who were averse to the match on account of a former disagreement between them and my relations, about some land that they held contiguous to their estate in ——shire. Both of us undoubtedly could not but think it hard, and rather cruel, that a thing in itself a trifle, and so long past, should be made a bar to our marriage, especially when we knew, neither she nor I occasioned or could prevent it ; however, so it was, and Cephisa would not have given me her hand, had not her father and mother, by seeming at *first* to approve of me, induced her to hope they would in a little time be reconciled ; for they permitted me to visit her without the least hesitation, till I asked them concerning the fortune they designed to give her, when they seemed quite surprized at  
the

the question, and after a long hesitation brought the above objection as a reason why their daughter should not marry me. It was now too late, her affections were fixt, as she then declared, and her happiness as well as mine wholly depended on our union to each other.

EVER since we came together, it has been our constant study and endeavour to regain their esteem, and we flattered ourselves with the thought, that when they found we lived in perfect harmony, loving and beloved, they would receive us into their favour, and grant us a share in their parental affections. The letters we both sent them, entreating their regard in the most respectful and humiliating terms, have been always answered with a coolness and indifference; but that which we received last night, was pen'd in such a harsh and angry stile as could not but give each of us great concern in the perusal of it; one expression especially, that, "*Supposing a single penny could save our lives, they would not give it.*" As it happened, my wife was not present when it came, and I (after reading the contents) thought it most prudent not to let her see it; accordingly, I was just going to burn it, when she entered the room hastily (having heard there was a letter for her in the parlour) and seeing it in my hand, asked me to show it her; but I refused, telling her it was too

long to read that night, but she should have it in the morning, as soon as she pleased ; (this I said, hoping to have an opportunity of destroying it before then.) I put it into my pocket, and nothing more being said about it, imprudently went to bed and forgot it ; next morning, being impatient to read it, she took it out privately while I was asleep (fatal curiosity !) and what followed I hardly know how to reveal.

SHE got up, went into the nursery, and took both our children into her arms, shedding a flood of tears over them, and kist each of them several times, repeating these words, “ God bless you  
 “ both, my *dear* little innocents ; I hope your  
 “ dear father will take care of you for my  
 “ sake :” then turning to the maid, who was quite at a loss to know the reason of her strange unaccountable behaviour, desired her to go and tell me she should not come down to breakfast, being taken ill with a pain in her head. When the maid returned to the room, she found the door locked, and knocking at it several times without having any answer, came to me in a great hurry to inform me of it. I went immediately, and breaking open the door, found her laying on the floor weltering in her blood, flowing from a wound in her throat, which on examination was cut too deep to cure. The letter abovementioned lay open on a table, with these words written at the bottom  
 of

of it with a pencil; " My dear and worthy  
 " H——, farewell; I loved you, and am certain  
 " was beloved by you, but my parents hate me :  
 " this thought distracts me; farewell—forever."

My little boy was stroking her face, and crying,  
 " Poor mamma," with tears trickling down his  
 tender cheeks, when I went up to her. I sent for  
 a surgeon, but he told me it was impossible to  
 be of any service. What will her hardened and  
 unnatural parents have to answer for? I cannot  
 proceed, my grief and confusion prevent my adding  
 more at present, than that I am, truly, your

Affectionate brother in affliction,

Thefaurus H——.



## LETTER XXIV.

*From Camillus to Albanes, with an account  
 of the death of an intimate friend, and a  
 remarkable dream he had relative thereto,  
 inclosed in an elegiac poem on his decease.*

S I R,

**Y**OUR desiring a copy of the elegy on my  
 learned and valuable friend Dr. Scott, is a  
 sufficient warrant for my troubling you with it at  
 present, without making any apology for so doing.  
 I am, sir,

Your's, &c.

Camillus.

( 184 )

A N

E L E G I A C P O E M,

On the DEATH of the late pious and learned  
JOSEPH NICOLL SCOTT, M. D.

Inscribed to his disconsolate WIDOW, by a  
SYMPATHIZING FRIEND\*.

*The Time, Midnight.*

**N**OCTURNAL darkness hides each pleasing view,  
And covers Nature with her solemn pall;  
The hinds no more their rural toils pursue,  
But o'er the meads the black'ning shadows fall.  
Now mimic Fancy takes her nightly reign,  
(While airy songsters rest on every spray)  
And draws fresh terrors in the sickly brain,  
Or paints anew the labours of the day.  
'Twas at this awful hour, when Silence keeps  
Her dreary station thro' the midnight air,  
And weary'd Industry securely sleeps,  
(While distant fields a sable aspect wear)  
A dreadful vision broke thy wonted rest,  
Oh SCOTT! for piety and learning fam'd;  
A chilling horror seiz'd thy troubled breast,  
While sudden starts some secret woe proclaim'd.

When

- 
- \* Tho' father, mother, husband, wife, or child,  
Or those whom friendship's tender ties unite,  
Sink in the clay-cold grave; be reconcil'd,  
Bow to the stroke, and say of all, 'Tis right.

When by permission, for thy greatest good,  
 A form angelic from the realms on high,  
 Ghastly appearance ! in thy chamber stood,  
 And said, in dismal accents ; “ *Thou must die !* ”  
 Struck with the message, tho’ devoid of sense,  
 Anxious to know the fatal time how near ;  
 Amaz’d and trembling in a dread suspense,  
 Thou ask’d it when ? It answer’d, “ *This day year ;* ”  
 Then disappear’d. Such was thy dream ; how true \*  
 Let weeping Martha say, she best can tell,  
 Whose faded cheeks continual tears bedew,  
 Whose heaving bosom sighs unnumber’d swell.

SAY Thou, the widow’d partner of his heart,  
 (To whom his mem’ry will be ever dear,  
 Who in his troubles bore a willing part,  
 Whose death foretold was all thou hadst to fear ;)  
 How great thy anguish when the foll’wing day,  
 He told his dream in vain from thee conceal’d ;  
 And kindly strove to chase thy fears away,  
 Or idly wish’d the vision unreveal’d.  
 Say Thou disconsolate surviving Fair,  
 (Who thought his life more precious than thy own)  
 What with thy heart-felt sorrows can compare,  
 For oh, thy much-lov’d dearer self is gone.

What

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\* The Author would not recommend a scrupulous attention to, or an entire disregard of dreams, for God speaketh to man in sleep, in slumberings on his bed, then he openeth his ears and causeth him to receive instruction. If dreams cause us to think seriously on the most interesting subjects of religion, they are to be accounted blessings, and attended to with gratitude and praise.

What strange foreboding doubts oppress thy mind,  
 While months roll'd on not unobserv'd by thee,  
 And every week which still remain'd behind,  
 Did but increase thy sad anxiety.  
 'Till lo! the time arriv'd, and prov'd too true,  
 Which greatly heighten'd every sorrow past,  
 For tho' in seeming health, such pains ensue,  
 As verify the dream and prove his last \*.  
 Methinks I see him on the verge of life,  
 O'erwhelm'd with grief to heav'n for mercy call,  
 " Lord! with thy choicest blessings crown my wife,  
 " My only joy, my comfort, and my all.  
 " Pardon my sins, O God; I know thou wilt,  
 " For 'tis thy gracious and benign decree,  
 " *I will forgive repenting sinners' guilt,*  
 " *And save the weakest soul who trusts in me.*  
 " Oh make poor Martha's life thy constant care,  
 " To her thy sweetest consolations give;  
 " May she forever in thy goodness share,  
 " For whose dear sake *alone* I wish to live.  
 " In deep distress, whenever danger's nigh,  
 " Be thou the watchful guardian of my love;  
 " Protect thro' life, and when she comes to die,  
 " Grant we may meet to part no more above."

What

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\* He was taken with a violent sickness, accompanied with symptoms of a lethargy, on that day year he had this remarkable dream, Wednesday the 20th of December 1769, and died the Saturday following.

What inward anguish did his looks betray,  
 When in the agonies of death, he cried,  
*We now must part !* then just was heard to say,  
 Pressing thy hand, *farewell, farewell,* and died.

BEWAILING friends, a melancholy train,  
 Attend his funeral to the distant grave ;  
 While Thou art left, in silence to complain,  
 To joy a stranger, and to grief a slave.  
 But, gentle Mourner, wipe thy streaming eyes,  
 For know, he's gone to realms of lasting peace,  
 Whilst God, the widow's refuge, never dies,  
 He reigns above, tho' all relations cease.

IN pity, Heav'n, behold a widow's grief,  
 And on her head continual mercies pour ;  
 In every trouble, be her sure relief,  
 And endless portion when this life is o'er.

### HIS EPITAPH.

WITHIN this dreary vault in silence lies  
 A tender husband and a friend sincere ;  
 Whose healing aid remov'd our painful cries ;  
 A loss so great at least deserves a tear.  
 Tho' health, oh Youth, may now thy steps attend,  
 And pleasures court, while time unheeded flies,  
 And thou may'st live unmindful of thy end,  
 Hear with attention what the grave replies :

REFLECT, presumptuous Man, how short thy space,  
 How few thy moments, and how quick they fly ;  
 The present time, the fleeting hours embrace,  
 For ere another morning *thou* may'st die.

## LETTER XXV.

*From Theron to Altamont, describing his situation; with his reflections in one of his evening walks, concluding with a quotation from Addison's Cato.*

I AM now sat down with a design to fulfil my engagement to my dear friend, in writing to him the first opportunity, a description of my present situation, which, I doubt not, you will accept with pleasure, as a token of that friendship and esteem I have ever profest, and would always endeavour to evidence I retain for one so well deserving universal regard as yourself. But no more on this head, or you will say I flatter; therefore to proceed: My brother's seat, where I now am, is about half a mile from the high road to Oxford, and five miles on this side that delightful city, surrounded with woods, lawns, groves, and flowery meads; in the front of it is a fine level green, in the middle of which is a circular basin, with a fountain of curious workmanship. A large and noble pair of iron gates, with a row of palisadoes, secure the green from the inroads of heedless travellers; opposite the gates is a long gravel walk, shaded by elms, growing in rows on each side, and terminated by a wide and extensive common, over which  
you

you have a beautiful prospect of the distant country, almost unbounded. On the left side of the walk, appears one of a serpentine form, shaded in the same manner, which leads to the church, and is reckoned above a mile in length, with verdant fields on one hand, and the common on the other, but separated from it by an elegant fence of Chinese railing. Here I often repair of an evening, with Thomson's Seasons, or some other entertaining Author, and while I read, am sweetly serenaded by the warblers of the groves from the o'ershadowing branches. On the right side of the walk is a grove, through which runs a transparent murmuring stream, and leads to a hermit's cave at the further end of it, wherein a skull and hour-glass, on an old-fashioned table, intimates gravity and meditation. Behind the house are the gardens, which are laid out in a rural and grotesque manner; in one part is a large and elegant summer-house, through which a door opens into a beautiful grotto; here a cold bath is made, surrounded with blue and white marble. At the extremity of the garden is a long and spacious canal, with a fine pleasure boat, where, in calm and pleasant weather, we drink tea of an afternoon; meadows, with herds and flocks on the borders of the stream, render the scene truly pleasant and agreeable. Walking one evening by the side of this fine piece of water,

water, my thoughts were employed on the beauties of the creation, displayed in every part of the variegated landscape presented to my view. How, said I, can man sufficiently admire and adore the wisdom that planned the amazing scheme, and the hand that formed the heavens and earth ! Let the Atheist, who denies the being of his Creator, look to the flowers enamelling yonder mead, the grass in yonder field, and the birds on every bough, twittering their evening mattins to the Supreme Author, and with the deepest prostration confess his folly, and own a God ; let him join with Cato,

. . . . . If there's a Power above me,  
 (And that there is, all Nature speaks aloud  
 Thro' all her works) he must delight in *virtue*,  
 And that which *he* delights in must be *happy*.

I WILL not detain you longer on a subject, which has so often employed much abler pens than mine, but leave it to Infinite Wisdom to make himself known (in his own time, which must be the best) to all whom he shall think fit ; in the mean while, may it be your and my happiness, to be led by every temporal spring, to the great fountain of all, is the earnest desire of,

Dear friend,

Your's, &c.

Theron.

## LETTER XXVI.

*From Rusticos to Priander, describing a summer-house belonging to his friend Philenor, with reflections on a morning's walk, concluding with an account of the melancholy end of Miss L. a young lady of beauty and merit.*

DEAR PRIANDER,

I AM now sat down in the study of my valuable friend Philenor, to answer your obliging letter. My present situation is quite agreeable to my solitary disposition, and invites me to serious reflection. At the bottom of a long gravel walk, shaded on each side with lofty elms, my friend has built a summer-house, the upper part of which is his study; opposite to the door, on a sort of shelf, is placed an hour-glass, and by the side of it a mirror, with a death's head on the top of it: underneath is written, in large characters, *Vide et nosce teipsum, tempus fugit* \*; intimating the shortness of time, and vanity of man in his best estate, or that the knowledge of one's-self is the greatest wisdom. From the windows, verdant fields, glittering streams, luxuriant meadows, and hanging woods, present

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\* See and know thyself, time flies away.

present the eye with a truly rural landscape, bounded only by the horizon. On the left, at a little distance, the church is seen, which appears an old Gothic building, adorned with a lofty spire, the work of hands ages ago mouldered into dust. On the right, a few lowly cottages, the dwellings of labouring swains, scattered here and there, with flocks and herds feeding in the adjoining meads, add to the simplicity of the sylvan scene. Near the above emblematical device, in an elegant book-case, is a well-chosen collection of authors, chiefly on religious subjects; by the side of it, a writing desk, and round the room several instructive and entertaining pictures, leading the spectator to the most interesting events in history, or representing the beauties of the distant country; here, secluded from the noise and hurry of the busy town, nothing appears to divert my attention or engage my thoughts, but what at the same time tends to calm and compose my mind, and fix it on objects heavenly and divine. At present, as the poet describes it,

The Sun, with fervid beams,  
O'er meadows, hills, and streams,  
Shines thro' the noon-tide hours,  
As beauteous charms decay  
Of sore distress the prey,  
So fade the drooping flowers;

While

While flocks and herds  
 With warbling birds  
 To some thick shade repair,  
 A cool retreat  
 From sultry heat,  
 Which now invades the air.

Welcome Solitude, which leaves me to enjoy my own reflections without disturbance, and affords me an opportunity, while Philenor is unavoidably engaged abroad, to correspond with my dear Priander. I took a walk this morning in the neighbouring fields, before the dews were exhaled by the increasing heat; a walk, by the side of flowery hedges, whose blossoms, while they pleased my eye, with their variegated colours, regaled my senses with the most delicious fragrance. The morning was pleasant, the air serene, and the heavens unclouded. As I past along, I could not help reflecting on the ingratitude too many are guilty of to their beneficent Creator for the mercies they enjoy, as numerous as they are unmerited. Health, that greatest of earthly blessings; wealth, that useful attendant upon man, though (it may be) granted in a rich abundance, how little noticed or acknowledged by the world in general, or individuals in particular. It is commonly observed, a thing not worth asking for, is not worth having; it may as well be said, a blessing not deserving

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our

our thankfulness and acknowledgment, is not worth our enjoying; but where is there such a one? Indeed, where is there the least of the Almighty's gifts to his creatures, which does not merit their highest gratitude, and call for their daily praise? Surely 'tis our duty to own our obligations to heaven even for our *existence*, much more for those favours which make it comfortable and happy.

I AM sorry to find your son turns out so indifferent; I am well persuaded 'tis not for want of the best example and instructions, but through a proneness in youth to follow pleasures and amusements, suited to their gay and unthinking tempers and dispositions; yet, give not up your hope concerning him, he may be reclaimed in time, be led to see his folly and undutifulness, and convinced of his error, repent and reform before it is too late; an over-ruling Providence may graciously interpose, and bring him to a sight and sense of his evil doings, and make him as remarkable a penitent as he is a sinner; I sincerely wish he may. No one is without his troubles of one kind or another. I received yesterday, the following melancholy account of that amiable and sensible young lady, Miss L——, which, I dare say, you have not been informed of, as it was kept as secret as possible by her relations,  
and

and only communicated to me by Mr. —, who is very intimate in the family.

LAST winter, Miss L—— was upon a visit to Mrs. Alfred, her aunt in town, and going to the different places of diversion, was greatly admired for her beauty (to be sure she was a fine figure.) Among the rest who fixt their eyes on her was a Mr. R——, a gay genteel young fellow, who, being acquainted with her aunt, easily got introduced into her company, and often made one of the party to attend her and Mrs. Alfred to the several amusements in vogue. In a few weeks, Miss L—— appeared prejudiced in his favour, and never seemed so chearful and happy as when he was present. Mr. R. observed her attachment to him with much pleasure, and continued more and more every day endeavouring to ingratiate himself into her esteem; he soon succeeded to the best of his wishes, and made an open confession of his passion to her: she received it with apparent satisfaction, but referred him to her aunt for permission to visit her as a lover \*. Mrs. Alfred, upon his mentioning it, told him she could not say any thing to it till she had wrote

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to

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\* If every young lady would act in this prudent manner whenever they are *first* address'd by young fellows, they would not have so many difficulties to struggle with as they often find in similar cases.

to Mr. L——, the young lady's father, which she promised to do the first opportunity; in the mean time, she took care they should never be alone together. The very day she sent the letter, she received one from Mr. L——, desiring his daughter might return immediately, as her eldest sister was extremely ill, and given over by the physicians. Miss L—— received the news with great trouble, not only on account of her sister's illness, but being obliged to leave London, and forced from the man who had gained her heart. Their parting was a scene too pathetic to describe; after telling him her direction, and shedding a flood of tears, she set off for her father's seat in Devonshire. Her arrival there, and meeting her sorrowful relations just as her sister died, was truly affecting; in short, it threw her into a melancholy. Her friends observed it, and endeavoured all they could to divert her, but something seemed to hang heavy on her spirits, too heavy to be removed, which she would not discover. However, one morning they went to call her to breakfast, and found she was gone out, nobody knew where, unless it was in the garden; diligent search was made for her to no purpose 'till the next day, when she was taken up drowned in a canal near Mr. L——'s house. In looking over her papers, a letter was found in her bureau from an acquaintance in town, informing her

Mr.

Mr. R—— was killed in a duel; and the last words he said, were, “ Oh dear, but absent “ Maria, could I have seen you once more, I “ should have died in peace. Farewell—for- “ ever.” At the bottom of the letter she had written the following lines :

TOO lovely youth, by all around approv'd,  
By all lamented, as by all belov'd,  
Why didst thou rashly thus thy life expose,  
And load Maria with unnumber'd woes?  
Fain would Religion lend her aid divine,  
While anxious friends their feeble efforts join,  
To raise my spirits and divert my grief,  
But all in vain; there's none can give relief.  
Heav'n only knows what sorrows tore my heart,  
In that sad hour when we were forc'd to part;  
But, oh! what tongue could half my anguish tell,  
When in th' above I read thy last farewell?  
'Twas for thy sake I wish'd to live alone;  
Now thou art dead, my life's a burthen grown:  
Dear youth farewell, earth has no joys for me,  
I cannot live without, I'll therefore die with thee.

HER family is truly a scene of confusion and distress, and really to be pitied. These rash resolutions and violent effects of a juvenile passion, I cannot but say, appear to me, not only the greatest weakness, but a flying in the face of Heaven, and may justly expect to be rewarded with eternal vengeance. Passions are to be regulated by reason, and over-awed by the dic-

tates of religion, or for what could our reasoning powers and faculties be given us? I know very few men now wish to persuade themselves their appetites were given them for any other purpose than to be satisfied, even at the expence of their health, reputation, and fortune: but Providence has appointed lawful methods and institutions for the sober and prudent gratification of them, as wise as they are beneficial to individuals and to the community, which is the duty, as well as highest interest of all to pursue. I fear you are quite tired with so long an epistle, therefore I'll subscribe myself,

Your's, &c.

Rusticus,



## LETTER XXVII.

*From Eusebius to Alcoret, demonstrating the advantages and superiority of a religious life, even supposing there was no future state; with a quotation from Ray on the Creation, and Young's Night Thoughts, in defence of his arguments.*

I WAS much surprized, on the reading of my dear friend's letter, to find he intimates a doubt concerning the reality of a future state, and seems to think with indifference on the importance of religion, especially respecting the grand

grand doctrine of a life of happiness or misery to come. Whatever arguments you may have been furnished with by the gay, thoughtless, and dissipated votaries of pleasure in favour of *annihilation*, be assured they will not bear a close examination without proving vain, trifling, and a lie.

“ ’Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,

“ And intimates eternity to man.” *Cato.*

“ Art thou such a clod to wish thyself all clay ?

“ Nature’s first wish is endless happiness ;

“ Annihilation is an after-thought,

“ A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies.”

*Young.*

THE present life is very properly called a state of trial, and well compared to a journey, a race, warfare, and a shadow that soon passeth away, when contrasted with, and considered as a passage to, or the time of preparing for an eternity to come ; without which consideration, the above similes which the Scriptures hold forth, would appear, and must be deemed trifling and absurd. But another strong argument for the reality of a future state, may be drawn from the apparent unequal distribution of rewards and punishments here, as well as the continual thirst in man for some future good ; above all, the declarations of sacred writ, which, speaking of the righteous and the wicked, says, *These shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal ; as death leaves them, judgment will find them ;* and

many more similar ones too numerous to mention in a letter, but well worthy your searching after and regard. Very few, if any, *really* disbelieve a future state, but many *wish* there was none, or endeavour to persuade themselves of it, because, supposing there is no such thing, they shall not be called to an account for their actions, which account they may have the greatest reason to dread the thoughts of. But you seem to imagine, if there is no hereafter you may live as you list, as the common observation is, and adopt the language of those who said, "*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;*" a very erroneous and blame-worthy method of thinking and acting this, which corrupt nature only can suggest and encourage.

No, my dear friend, be assured, from the writings and experience of all ages, that Virtue is its own reward and Vice its own punishment in the *present* life; this we have daily proofs of, especially the *latter*, from the frequent untimely and ignominious ends of the profligate and abandoned in our day. May such repeated warnings and examples of the truth of divine revelation, *The end of these things is death*, make a suitable impression on the minds of all, and direct us to *be spiritually minded, which is life and peace*.

SHOULD we, for argument's sake, admit a probability of annihilation, yet a life of piety  
and

and virtue will be found the safest and the best, in this case, not only as the means of prolonging our existence \*, but to procure the enjoyment of peace of mind, chearfulness of temper, and in a great measure health and content. In this view, a virtuous life is not only our highest, but best policy to pursue, as the way to the greatest happiness and tranquillity that can be enjoyed on earth. Dr. Young very justly says,

*Religion's all.*

For it insures us felicity here below, and if there is an eternity, everlasting joy; there is all in it we can want to make us happy for both worlds, on that account 'tis all we should follow and chiefly prize.

THE late bishop of Chester, in a discourse on natural religion, speaking of the advantages arising from the belief of a Supreme Being, and living up to such a belief, observes: " He that  
 " believes and owns a God, if there should be  
 " none, is in no danger of any bad consequence,  
 " for all the inconvenience of this belief will be,  
 " that he may be hereby occasioned to tie him-  
 " self up to some needless restraints during this  
 " short time of his life; wherein, notwithstanding,  
 " ing, there is as to the *present*, much peace,  
 " quiet,

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\* The Scriptures assert, *wicked men live not out half their days.*

“ quiet, and safety ; and as to the *future*, his  
 “ error shall die with him, there being none to  
 “ call him to an account for his mistake.” And  
 Mr. Ray, in his Treatise on the Wisdom of  
 God in the Creation, quoting the above passage,  
 very properly adds, “ He not only suffers no  
 “ damage from the belief of an hereafter, but  
 “ reaps a considerable benefit from his mis-  
 “ take, if there is none ; for during this life, he  
 “ enjoys a pleasant dream or fancy of a future  
 “ blessed state ; with the thoughts and expecta-  
 “ tions whereof he solaces himself, and agreeably  
 “ entertains his time ; and is in no danger of  
 “ being ever awakened out of it, or convinced  
 “ of his error and folly, death making a full end  
 “ of him.”

EXCUSE my troubling you with these quota-  
 tions ; but, as I am well assured I cannot advance  
 any thing more to the purpose, and as you may  
 not have met with or observed them, permit me  
 to recommend them to your private meditations,  
 as remarks, suited in the strongest manner to cor-  
 roborate and support the arguments I have men-  
 tioned in the former part of this letter, and to  
 convince you there were persons, famed for piety,  
 virtue, and the knowledge of men and things,  
 of the same opinion with myself. Upon the  
 whole, you may take it for an undeniable  
 fact ; and it is my earnest desire you may ever  
 experience

experience Religion is the best profession, the Knowledge of God and yourself the truest wisdom, and Temperance the best physic, or a life of piety and virtue, the spring of unspeakable comfort and happiness on earth, and a prelude to your inheritance of eternal glory in heaven.

FORGIVE the length of this, and believe me to be, with the greatest sincerity,

Dear friend,

Your real well-wisher for both worlds,

Eusebius.



## LETTER XXVIII.

RETIREMENT, FRIENDSHIP, AND BOOKS.

*A letter to a friend, describing the way to improve a country life; the blessings of real friendship, and recommending what books to read for instruction and entertainment.*

### RETIREMENT.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE manner in which some persons spend their time in the country, wholly devoted to the pursuit of field sports or the pleasures of the bottle, is not to be imitated but condemned; for

for we were created by an all-wise Supreme, for higher and nobler ends, than to gratify our appetites and passions, in following a continual round of amusements and dissipation, or to pass away our lives in a dull and slothful inactivity.

Th' omniscient Lord of heav'n and earth,  
Whose nod alone was Nature's birth,

Endued his creature, *Man*, with reasoning powers and faculties, that he might glorify his *Maker*, adorn his station, and do all possible good to his fellow creatures \*. We have duties to practise and employments to pursue, under the several characters of probationers for eternity, the loyal subjects of the best of sovereigns, members of the community, parents, children, friends, &c. which disregarding, we forfeit the name of christians, and expose ourselves to the vengeance of a righteous God.

I RECOMMEND not hunting, shooting, and the like diversions †, as they appear to me extremely hazardous, and in some measure cruel. What exercises then, you may reply, would you advise me to? Riding, walking, and every other innocent divertisement, that while they promote health  
of

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\* Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,  
And bade self-love and social be the same.

*Pope.*

† Read Thomson's *Autumn*, especially from line 360.

of body and chearfulness of mind, offend not religion, virtue, or morality; or denominate you presumptuous and hard-hearted.

ABOVE all, take care to keep your thoughts employed in serious and instructive subjects, lest they prove the occasion of the worst of actions. Of all idleness, that of the *Mind* is the most to be avoided. Reading treatises on Divinity, History, Ethics, and the study and practice of the polite Arts, with frequent reflections on the works of Creation, Providence, and Grace, joined to the company and conversation of a few select friends; together with relieving, as far as in your power, the necessitous and indigent, will make retirement, at all times and in all weathers, welcome, laudable, and improving: without a taste for the above exercises and employments, solitude must be only a stupid, unenviable, and inglorious life \*.

\* Persons who have a turn for husbandry and gardening, may always find amusement and recreation in the recesses of the country, in all seasons of the year, healthful, innocent, and commendable.

Happy the man, whom bounteous Gods allow,  
With his own hands paternal grounds to plow;  
Oh! happy, if he knew his happy state,  
The swain, who free from bus'ness and debate,  
Receives his easy food from Nature's hand,  
And just returns of cultivated land.

*Dryden's Virgil.*

*Vide Lucas on the happiness of a contemplative life.*

## FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN poverty, through unforeseen, and therefore unavoidable disappointments, losses, and misfortunes, in the course of business, reduces the once affluent, successful, and industrious merchant, into a state of trouble, vexation, and distress, how welcome must the company of a benevolent man, touched with a sense of his fellow creature's melancholy situation, be to one in such circumstances; but how much more pleasing and acceptable must be the gift, when bestowed by a sympathizing heart into the lap of famine, sickness, and despair; the former is the picture of a friend, the latter the generous effusion of a real disinterested friendship.

As happiness and misery are the constant attendants on mortality, the enjoyment of the one is heightened, and the suffering of the other alleviated, by the aid and endearments of a real friend. Though Providence has bestowed on you riches in abundance\*, you would still be unhappy if destitute of a friend; should he be pleased to visit you with affliction, you might still be happy in the sympathy of friendship;  
 then

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\* The above letter was written to a young gentleman, on his being called into the country, to take possession of a large estate left him by a distant relation.

then bleſs the Almighty for giving you the one, and endeavour to merit the continuance of the other. Let univerſal benevolence animate your breaſt, and a noble philanthropy influence your actions; may piety to God inſpire you with devotion, and charity to men excite you to liberality.

FRIENDSHIP is that actuating principle of the mind, which ſtimulates a perſon to kind and obliging offices, independent of age, ſex, and condition in life. Should the chill hand of penury damp your enjoyment of the good things of the preſent ſtate, ſhould the pains incident to humanity attack your tenement of clay, and threaten its ſpeedy diſſolution; friendship can adminiſter comfort in the one caſe, and yield the aſſwaging balm of conſolation in the other. Dr. Young, ſpeaking of the benefits of friendship, ſays,

“ Lorenzo, haſt thou no friend to ſet thy mind  
“ abroach ?

“ Good ſenſe will ſtagnate, thoughts ſhut up want air

“ And ſpoil like bales unopen’d to the ſun.

A juſt remark, worthy the remembrance and regard of all. The diſtreſs of that man, who on the brink of indigence and ruin, is deſtitute of a friend to commiſerate and aſſiſt him, can be deſcribed no otherwiſe than by ſtiling it inexpreſſibly great and inconceivably affecting: to give  
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an adequate idea of it, I must compare the poor wretched and friendless creature to an affrighted mariner in a storm, surrounded with dangers on every side, his vessel shattered by the conflicting elements, without sails, masts, and rudder, and every brother sailor drowned but himself; the picture is deeply shaded, and yet not exaggerated in the least.

WHILE the ambitious are courting honours, the covetous riches, and the young pleasures, may it be your and my happiness to have true friends, whose constant aim may be to prove themselves worthy our unreserved confidence and unalterable esteem; whose lives and conversation may be consonant to the precepts of religion, and shew them to the world as *Men and Christians*: with such, every earthly blessing will be enhanced, every sorrow lessened, and every grief allayed; with such, poverty will be supportable, and calamities, though ever so deplorable, able to be born. Without such desirable treasures, the most elevated station would be exalted misery, and the greatest fortune the inheritance of discontent.

GRANT, O Thou Divine Philanthropist! the continuance of these inestimable blessings to my friend, that he may pity kings, who are daily surrounded with none but *flattering* attendants, and be taught to *live* as well as *speak* thy praise.

FRIEND-

FRIENDSHIP, the medicine of life, and a friend, the physician who administers it, under the influences of religion, calm the fever of anger, cure the ague of fear, remove the low spirits of despondency, dissipate the vapours of doubt, give ease in the ragings of trouble, and felicitate the regions of mortality; this invaluable restorative is preserved in an *honest* heart, and readily operates by producing an unchangeable affection, sympathy, and benevolence.

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### B O O K S.

IN the former part of this letter I recommended for part of your amusement and employ, in your solitude and retirement from the cares of business and the noise of the capital, *reading*, as a rational, improving, and agreeable entertainment. Permit me to remind you on this head, not to run over, in a careless or indifferent manner, any author's production, lest you lose the benefit of instruction; weigh and consider well what you read, and in order to fix on your mind particular passages, new and worthy your remark, keep pen, ink and paper by you to write them down for your frequent perusal and remembrance. Take particular care what books you chuse respecting Divinity: I would advise you to peruse few, if any, Treatises on *controvertial*

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points;

points \*; study well the *Scriptures*, and implore wisdom from on high to lead you into the true sense and meaning of them for your eternal profit and advantage; be chiefly solicitous to be grounded and established in the most essential doctrines of faith and practice in religion, without puzzling yourself with respect to particular modes and ceremonies of worship, which strictly adhered to, may only declare you more nice than wise. “*Try all things, but hold fast that which is good.*” Forgive my freedom in offering you advice on this subject, as it is deviating from the enquiry what books are most worthy your regard, and best adapted to elucidate the paths to knowledge, virtue, piety, and happiness? To proceed then without further digression, I would admonish you for your better understanding the sacred writings, to consult Henry’s Exposition of the Old and New Testament; Poole’s Annotations, and Doddridge’s family Expositor. To inform your judgment concerning the Gospel method of salvation, read that justly admired, though plain narrative, Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, together with Doddridge’s Rise and progress

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\* The young gentleman to whom the above was written, had requested in a letter to the author, his advice and opinion concerning the best way to spend a Country life, his thoughts on Friendship, and what Books were most worthy his purchasing and perusal.

gress of Religion in the Soul ; Allein's Alarm to unconverted Sinners ; The whole Duty of Man ; Hervey's Meditations, and Theron and Aspasio ; Mrs. Rowe's Works ; Henry on the Sacrament ; Dr. Watts's Works ; Young's Night Thoughts ; Flavel's Works ; Taylor's Holy Living and Dying ; Sherlock on Death and a future State ; Bishop Beveridge's Private Thoughts ; Tillotson's Works, and Baxter's Saint's rest.

For your assistance in studying the works of Nature, consult Durham's Physico and Astro-Theology ; Ray on the Creation ; Spectacle de la Nature, or, Nature Display'd ; Pearfall's Contemplations and Dialogues ; Religious Philosopher, and Brown on the Works of Creation, with his Sunday Thoughts. To shew you the value of time, and how to improve it, read Dr. Young's true Estimate of Human Life ; Lucas's Enquiry after Happiness, and Allen's Guide to Glory. To instruct you in the principles of morality, the love of Virtue, Self-knowledge, and OEconomy, with a Guide to the Polite Arts, study Seneca's Morals, the Spectators, Tatlers, Guardians, and Rambler ; Thomson's Seasons, Mason on Self-knowledge ; the Gentleman's Library, and the Preceptor. To acquaint yourself with the Beauties of Poetry, read Milton's Paradise Lost and Regained ; Byssé's Art of Poetry, and Doddsley's Collection of Poems, with Prior's

Poems; Dryden's Works, Churchill's Poems, Addison's Cato; Pomfret's Last Remains, and Pope's Art of Criticism, in the first volume of his Works. To improve you in History, Antiquities, the Arts and Sciences, Biography and Conversation, study Hume's History of England; Burnett's History of his own Times; Fox's Book of Martyrs; Chambers's Dictionary of Arts and Sciences; Thomson and Shaw's Travels; Jackson's Chronological Antiquities; Martin's Magazine of Arts and Sciences; Kennet's Roman and Potter's Greek Antiquities; Guthrie's History of all Nations; Camden's Britannia; Salmon's Gazetteer and Geographical Grammar; Dr. Harris's Use of the Globes; Œconomy of Human Life; Locke on Human Understanding; Rollin's Ancient History, and his method of studying the Belles Lettres; Richardson's Novels; Plutarch's Lives; Mawe's Every Man his own Gardener; Miller's Gardener's Calendar; Bradley on Husbandry and Gardening; Burnet's Theory of the Earth; Watson's Animal World displayed; Well's Astronomy, and his Art of Shadows; the Art of Drawing and Painting in Water Colours, published by Kitchen. The above books, with Bailey's and Johnson's Dictionaries of the English language, and a few correct sheet maps of the several parts of the world, will make up a useful, valuable, and entertaining library,

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not merely for show but service, which may afford an agreeable amusement at all times, especially if you add to them a pair of globes, a telescope, a microscope, an air-pump, a prism, a glass for viewing prints, and an electrifying machine. I have now, I hope, answered your enquiries to your satisfaction ; if so, I have gained my end, and shall think myself happy in your approbation and the continuance of your letters, if you will oblige me with them, informing me how you spend your time, and what progress and new discoveries you make in your different studies.

MAY you enjoy the Creator in the creature, live to his glory here, and after death with him forever in Heaven, is the earnest prayer of,

Dear friend,

Your's, &c.

## S O L I T U D E ;

O R,

## T H E W I S H .

## A P O E M .

**S**HOULD gracious Heav'n in mercy condescend,  
 My wish to answer and my prayer attend,  
 A rural cot should be my lone retreat,  
 Of health the dwelling, and of peace the seat ;  
 In some neat village, near a market town,  
 Alike remov'd from envy and renown,  
 There would I live, from noise and tumult free,  
 To anxious cares a happy stranger be ;  
 There undisturb'd my thoughts should mount on high,  
 And learn that useful lesson, how to die.  
 There would I strive to mend my errors past,  
 And spend each day, preparing for my last ;  
 While in the town, where dwell the sons of trade,  
 Continual offerings are to riches paid,  
 And fortunes lost, as well as fortunes made.

AMBITION, pride, and greatness I disclaim,  
 Nor seek for honours, titles, wealth, or fame :  
 Can these procure me health or peace of mind,  
 When troubles vex, or by disease confin'd ?  
 Can they withhold the fatal stroke of death,  
 Or but a moment stay the parting breath ?

Can

Can they secure me from eternal pain,  
 Or pardon, righteousness and glory gain?  
 They can't avail me; for they neither know,  
 To purchase happiness or banish woe.  
 Grace, health, contentment, I alone implore,  
 O grant me these, kind Heav'n, I'll ask no more;  
 But patient waiting what remains behind,  
 I'll live thy praises, and I'll die resign'd.

## The AUTHOR's intended EPITAPH,

*Written by himself.*

Here are reposit'd the Remains of —  
 Who, in a middle Station of Life, enjoyed  
 All that true Happiness and Felicity  
 In a Sylvan Retirement,  
 Which the  
 Young, ambitious, and the gay  
 Seek for in vain  
 In the pursuit of  
 Pleasures, Honours, and Emoluments.  
 He was neither the Favourite of  
 Fortune,  
 Nor the Prey of Indigence,  
 But lived and died in a State of  
 Easy Independence,  
 And in the joyful Hopes of  
 Inheriting eternal Bliss  
 In Glory.

Reader, go Home, study the Bible,  
 and prepare for Death.

F I N I S.

